THE WAR DEPARTMENT, 1861

A Study in Mobilization and Administration

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To

ROBERT McCORMACK

PREFACE

THE present study is the outgrowth of research begun in a seminar in 1922 under the direction of Professor Nathaniel W. Stephenson. It was the author's original intention to carry his investigations of the War Department through the four years of the Civil War, but at an early stage it became apparent that to do so would lead too far afield for present purposes. As the conflict progressed the War Office and its bureaus, under the pressure of increasing demands from enlarged military forces, gradually expanded into a huge, smooth-running machine. The operations of the several bureaus are studied in themselves; the activities and character of the energetic and blustering Secretary Stanton deserve a fresh examination and appraisal.

The administration of the department in 1861 and the related work of putting an army in the field seemed to constitute a distinct chapter in the history of the period. They represent the struggles and experiences of a democratic government, totally unprepared for war, and hampered by incompetent management and legal provisions requiring decentralized military control, in attempting to meet the gigantic problems of war on a grand scale.

In the following pages it has been the author's purpose to present the military conditions—conditions which were the direct outgrowth of a short-sighted military policy—as the Lincoln administration found them, to show how they complicated its task and to set forth the obstacles it had to face in putting the department and the army on an adequate war footing. By the time Secretary Cameron departed from

the War Office in January, 1862, the federal government had finally succeeded, clumsily and at an excessive cost, in placing more than half a million men in the field and had built up an establishment to sustain them. It had gathered into its own hands most of the control over the army and was about ready to carry on war on an efficient and effective basis. That this much had been accomplished was not due to the efforts of Cameron: it was largely in spite of him. That the government was yet to suffer trials and defeats before a general could be found who could lead the northern legions to victory was not the fault of the War Department: it was one of the problems of war.

To contend that the government should have had at its command in the winter of 1860-1861 a standing army of 25,000 or 30,000 well-equipped men instead of about 16,000, and a sufficient civil organization to support it, is not to contend, as some would have us believe, that the United States should have been on a militaristic basis. It was no more than was needed for moderate defense. In proportion, it would have meant a force no larger than the United States maintains today. And after all, militarism is not a matter of numbers: it is a matter of spirit, of purpose. Neither Buchanan nor Lincoln had a spark of the militarist about him; it is highly improbable that either would have been any less conscientious, any less cautious, with 30,000 troops than with the numbers he had. But they would have been in an infinitely more effective position to repel an attack. If Lincoln had had such a force at his disposal, both North and South might have been spared much of the suffering, death and destruction that four years of civil war brought.

Like every worker in the field of history, the author is under a host of obligations, great and incidental, for courtesies shown and assistance rendered. The officials of the

New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania Historical Societies were very helpful, and Mr. John C. Fitzpatrick of the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress extended whole-hearted and invaluable cooperation in locating data in the numerous collections in the Library. The officials of the War Department, both in the Old Records Division and at Fort Myer, Maryland, were also generous of their time and efforts. Major John Brooks of the Adjutant General's section, by his geniality and kindnesses lightened the labors of many a day. It is due to the authorities of the department to state that the responsibility for the conclusions drawn from the many records examined there rests solely with the writer.

Professor Theodore C. Pease of the University of Illinois generously placed at the author's disposal the manuscript of the Browning Diary at the time when it was being prepared for the press. An earnest effort, in which a number of persons kindly cooperated, was made to locate the Simon Cameron papers, but without success. It seems very probable that no collection of them, except the comparatively small group in the Pennsylvania Historical Society, is now in existence. Mrs. Viola Grove Meneely transcribed the manuscript for submission and printing and by her painstaking work saved the writer a great deal of time and labor.

Throughout the preparation of this study Professor Nathaniel W. Stephenson, now of Scripps College, has maintained the kindliest interest and has given much encouragement and many useful suggestions. He read a portion of the manuscript and helped materially to improve it. Professor Dixon Ryan Fox has also been very helpful in guiding the author in his work. He and Professor David S. Muzzey read and criticized the entire manuscript and to them hearty appreciation is expressed. Professor Roy F. Nichols of the University of Pennsylvania courageously consented

to read the monograph in proof and Miss Katharine E. Brand of Amherst, Massachusetts, has been of very great assistance in the proofreading. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Most of all the author is indebted to the several members of his family who have aided so generously and encouraged him so consistently in all of his educational work. To the one who has made possible the preparation of this book, it is affectionately dedicated.

A. HOWARD MENEELY.

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CHAPTER I

Neglect and Vacillation

The outbreak of civil war in April, 1861, found the United States Government utterly unprepared. The Republican party, fresh from a hard-won victory at the polls, had been in control of administrative affairs scarcely six weeks. The work of organization was only well begun. The new President was without previous executive experience and practically untried in national politics; his Cabinet members were still novices in the work of their departments; the office-hungry politicians and party creditors generally still crowded and cluttered the Executive Mansion, the government buildings and offices in search of place and favor. Worse than all this was the fact that the new administration received from the hands of the old a government divided and shaken to its very foundation by questions of slavery and state-rights.

No branch of the service needed to be in readiness for the impending conflict more than the military, yet it is doubtful if any was less prepared. For this lamentable condition and because they failed to forestall civil strife by the use of the army, it has long been the fashion to consign President Buchanan and his Secretary of War, John B. Floyd, to the gibbet of public censure. Buchanan undoubtedly had his weaknesses of indecision and vacillation, and the shortcomings of Floyd were manifold, but the responsibility for the military deficiencies at least was not theirs alone. The roots of the difficulty go much deeper: they run back to the beginning of the century, to the days of Jefferson's Presidency. To understand why and how such depletion could and did

exist, it is necessary to examine at least cursorily the military program from that time forward.

Long ago Washington had counseled his countrymen that "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace," but though they cherished his memory, they quickly and almost completely rejected his advice on defense. To Jefferson a standing army was incompatible with the principles of democracy and an unwarranted expense to the public treasury. A disciplined militia in the states which would rush to the coast and the border to repel the invader was all that was necessary and all that was desirable. Little did he realize when he so admonished the people in his first inaugural that federalist New England, a dozen years later, would decline to place her militia at the complete disposal of the national government, would even go so far as to aid in subsisting a British foe on the Canadian border.[1] Yet Jefferson struck the chord that appealed to the common man and guided the United States Congress throughout the century. The motive which actuated them may have differed somewhat from his, but the result remained much the same.

Our military policy has been against a large standing army as a menace to liberty. Under this policy we have fought foreign wars, a civil war and Indian wars, and in every case our ultimate victory has been convincing proof to the people and their representatives that as a nation we are invincible and that the policy is sound and ought to be continued. Militia and volunteers have always been relied upon and ultimate success has convinced us that a substantial regular force is neither a necessity nor an asset worthy of its cost. Little have we realized that our wars have been prolonged because we have failed to make judicious and economical preparation. Jealousy and distrust of a standing army,

[1] Adams, Henry, *History of the United States,* vol. vii, p. 146.

confidence in the ultimate success of the raw recruit and remoteness from powerful nations have been significant factors in determining our military program and our national history.[1]

Shortly after the accession of Jefferson to the Presidency the regular army, already a minimum force, was reduced until it was not an army at all. From then on, Congress occasionally increased it to meet existing emergencies, but usually curtailed it again when the crisis had passed away. Almost never was a broad, statesmanlike view of military affairs taken. Emergency measures were, as a rule, hastily drawn, and frequently found to be faulty, ill-advised and inappropriate for the occasion. Though control over the military was tightly held by Congress in peace times, in war the President was permitted to exercise practically *carte blanche* authority.

When the War of 1812 broke upon the nation the actual fighting force numbered a little over 6,700 men. The commanders were old or inexperienced men, given to intemperate drinking and grossly ignorant of military affairs. Arms, clothing and supplies were lacking. Untrained militia

[1] In his excellent treatise on *The Military Policy of the United States,* General Emory Upton demonstrates that a faulty army organization which did not permit of expansion readily when war began, and reliance upon militia and volunteers in the several wars of the nineteenth century, inevitably prolonged the struggles, resulted in increased deaths and cost infinitely more in the end than would have been the case had a reasonable standing force been maintained.

In the twentieth century the same policy of reliance upon the national guard and volunteers has been continued. President Wilson's annual message of 1914 was an appeal for an adherence to the traditional policy, but in the following year he became convinced of the need of better preparation, and took the leadership in advocating it. Some legislation was effected for the increase of the army, national guard and navy, but the country entered the war in 1917 in an exceedingly ill-equipped condition, relied mainly upon volunteers and conscripted men and made most of its preparations after entering the contest.

and volunteers, fresh from the plough and workshop, were counted upon to beat off the foe.[1] The country fought losing battles while it frantically made belated preparations. The consequent prolongation of the war resulted in expenditures from 1812 to 1815 inclusive which were nearly double what the total outlays had been for the previous twenty-one years.[2] Jefferson's economy program was not economy after all.

The pacific Madison saw the fallacy of the policy that had been pursued. In laying the peace treaty before Congress on February 18, 1815, he said:

> Experience has taught us that neither the pacific dispositions of the American people nor the pacific character of their political institutions can altogether exempt them from that strife which appears beyond the ordinary lot of nations to be incident to the actual period of the world, and the same faithful monitor demonstrates that a certain degree of preparation for war is not only indispensable to avert disaster in the onset, but affords also the best security for the continuance of peace.[3]

He therefore asked for the "maintenance of an adequate regular force." Madison's logic was irrefutable; it was grounded in the inglorious struggle just ended, and Congress for the moment accepted it. In readjusting the military to a peace-time footing it provided for an army of 10,000 men.[4] But its memory proved short and six years later it curtailed the force to 6,183 officers and men.[5]

For fifteen years there was little change. The Florida War beginning in 1836, found the army with a paper

[1] Babcock, Kendric C., *The Rise of American Nationality*, pp. 78-80.

[2] Upton, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[3] Richardson, James D., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. i, p. 553.

[4] Scott, Winfield, *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Scott*, vol. i, p. 155; Upton, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

strength of 7,198, but only 3,142 could be mustered for immediate roll-call.[1] Congress of necessity again fell back upon make-shift measures; in the course of the war it added 5,341 to the regulars and summoned 28,307 militia and volunteers to the colors. Millions of dollars were expended and a heavy toll of life taken in a six-year struggle to subdue a tribe of Indians.[2] Disregarding these astonishing facts, a few days after the war closed in 1842 Congress reduced the regular force once more, this time to a theoretical strength of 8,613.[3] This meant about one trained soldier to every 2,000 people in the United States, a force not large enough to protect against the ravages of the Indians, much less to guard against a foreign foe.[4] By the end of 1845 the actual muster was only 7,883 [5]—and this in spite of the fact that war with Mexico was imminent.

Recognizing this inadequacy, General Scott requested in his annual report of 1845 that the number of noncommissioned officers and privates be augmented to 15,843, and the Secretary of War, William L. Marcy, in his annual report of the same year urged the enlargement of the regular force.[6] But Congress did nothing, and three months later General Taylor was informed he must depend upon raw troops.

Unwilling to increase the regular force when counseled

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 2, 24th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 53-55.

[2] Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 260; Upton, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-192.

[3] *United Statutes at Large*, vol. v, p. 512; *House Exec. Doc.* No. 2, 27th Cong., 3rd Sess., p. 201.

[4] Ganoe, William Addleman, *History of the United States Army*, p. 191.

[5] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 2, 29th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 209 and table. Ganoe says that the actual strength was only 5,300. If this was the case, the army's effective strength was less than at any time since 1808, though the population since that time had doubled and the troops were occupying more than 100 posts. *Op. cit.*, p. 196.

[6] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 2, 29th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 195-196, 210.

on good authority, Congress soon after the outbreak of war with Mexico resorted to the old policy of calling volunteers, men who were of almost no value until schooled in the discipline of the soldier and trained in the science of war. On May 13, 1846, two days after President Polk declared that war existed, a bill was approved authorizing the President to call not exceeding 50,000 volunteers to serve twelve months or to the end of the war, and appropriating ten million dollars for the purpose.[1] The term of militia when called into United States service was lengthened to six months. Volunteers were obliged to furnish their own clothes, horses and equipment, except arms. As compensation for clothing, the volunteer received the amount allowed to regular soldiers, and for those who were mounted, forty cents a day were allowed for their horses.[2]

The law, rushed through both houses of Congress and approved in two days, contained costly mistakes. In the first place, the term of service was unfortunate, granting as it did an option of twelve months or for the war. The volunteer could quit the service after a year whether the war was ended or not. If he did so, another raw recruit took his place and the slow and costly training began once more. Again, the failure to clothe and equip the men from government stores could not but result in a motley-clad aggregation. The compensation granted for this purpose was not always spent for clothing, and many of the men suffered in health and became unfit for service.[3] Furthermore, one section of the act, ignoring that the new force was not militia, provided that the officers should be appointed according to the laws in their states, a provision neither suited to uniformity, ability nor efficiency. It cast out of the hands of the federal govern-

[1] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. ix, p. 9.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. Congress later increased the allowance. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[3] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 4, 29th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 56.

ment a power which properly belonged there. Congress had acted hurriedly and its work showed the effects.

At the same time that this act calling for volunteers was approved, Congress relented from its former stand and an act authorized the President to increase the enlisted force of the regular army to 16,998 men.[1] Now that war was upon the nation, Congress was eagerly giving to the executive power which in peace times it had stubbornly withheld from motives of economy or jealousy of the military. But it was not easy to recruit men for the long five-year term in the regular army when they could serve for a year as volunteers and then be discharged. Consequently the force increased slowly. Secretary of War Marcy, in his report of December 5, 1846, said that the regular force numbered only about 10,300, several thousand men less than the authorized strength.[2] Finally, Congress, on January 12, 1847, permitted men joining this branch of the service to serve the full term or during the war, and provided a bounty as an inducement to men to enlist.[3] This helped, and before the war ended the regular force totaled 31,024, and the volunteers and militia aggregated 73,260, a grand total of 104,284.[4] There can be little doubt but that if the regular army had been of reasonable size in the beginning, such a large force would not have been necessary. As it was, Congress had literally bungled its way through to success. Justin H. Smith has well said that " for an elect body our Congress fell below all reasonable expectations. The comedy of its political manoeuvres was only surpassed by the tragedy of them." [5] Its work was superficial, vital matters were

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 4, 29th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 53; *U. S. Stat.*, vol. ix, p. 11.

[2] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 4, *loc. cit.*, p. 53.

[3] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. ix, pp. 117-118.

[4] Upton, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

[5] Smith, Justin H., *The War with Mexico*, vol. ii, pp. 313-14.

overlooked, and it early put into the hands of President Polk the power of organizing the forces and appointing such general officers as he saw fit.[1]

The Mexican War should have taught the national legislature that such a policy was short-sighted and inadequate. The system of relying on militia and volunteers had proved a faulty one. Secretary Marcy had said in his report of 1846 "that it is no disparagement to them to say that a regular force was to be preferred in a war to be prosecuted in a foreign country."[2] He had pointed out that illness among the volunteers was far more prevalent than among the regulars.[3] They were also wasteful of clothing, provisions and ammunition, both heedlessly and through ignorance of administrative business, nor did they properly care for the arms provided them. They were not readily amenable to discipline and the routine labors of campaigning, and even at the close of the war could not be called satisfactory troops.[4]

But Congress did not perceive the mistake involved in sharply curtailing the regulars in peace times. In the laws providing for the increase of the regular force during the war, care was taken to provide for a radical reduction at its termination. As a consequence, the army in 1849 numbered 10,310.[5] Although the Military Academy furnished most of the trained young officers in the war, and to them belonged much of the credit for the speedy victory, Congress soon afterwards considered the advisability of its abolition

[1] Ganoe, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

[2] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 4, *loc. cit.*, p. 54.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 56. The surgeon-general said that from the best information obtainable the illness among the volunteers on the Rio Grande was four times as great as among the regulars, with a corresponding excess of mortality. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[4] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 319; see notes, pp. 512-513.

[5] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 5, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., p. 188, table.

on the ground that it raised up a sort of aristocracy. But it finally contented itself by reducing the monthly pay of the cadets.[1]

By an act of June 17, 1850, Congress did authorize the President to expand the companies of regular regiments serving, or which might thereafter serve, at the frontier posts.[2] The President, however, took no steps until 1853-1854 to carry out this provision. At that time the enlisted body was increased to 13,259, a force which could afford but meager protection to a vast region, part of which had been acquired by the recent conflict.[3] In view of this, an act of March 3, 1855, increased the army by two cavalry and two infantry regiments, but by December, 1855, the Secretary of War reported its actual strength was only 15,752 men.[4] From 1855 to 1861, Congress provided for but one enlargement of the force that is worthy of notice. On April 7, 1858, a bill was approved providing for a regiment of Texas mounted volunteers for defending the Texas frontier and authorizing the President to accept the services of volunteers not to exceed two regiments "for the purpose of quelling disturbances in the Territory of Utah, for the protection of supply and emigrant trains, and the suppression of Indian hostilities on the frontier." The term of service for these three regiments was limited to eighteen months and the men were again obliged to provide their own horses and horse equipments for which they were allowed forty cents a day compensation.[5]

In 1860, the year preceding the outbreak of rebellion, the

[1] Ganoe, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[2] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. ix, p. 438.

[3] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 1, part ii, 33rd Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 53, footnote.

[4] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. x, p. 639; *House Exec. Doc.* No. 1, part ii, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 3.

[5] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xi, pp. 262-263.

only evidence on the statute books testifying to Congressional interest in the army is an act which among other things increased the rations of sugar and coffee for enlisted men, and created a commission to inquire into the "organization, system of discipline and course of instruction at the United States Military Academy!" [1] Appropriations for the army were less in 1860 than they had been in any year since 1855.[2] For the navy they were less than in any year since 1854.[3]

From the fall of Mexico City in September, 1847, to the bombardment of Sumter in April, 1861, there was peace, disturbed intermittently by Indian uprisings and the Utah trouble of 1858, but these were hardly of sufficient moment seriously to interrupt the usual routine of peace-time administration. The army, however, was never idle. The great expanse of western country, little known and almost wholly undeveloped, afforded a varied field for its usefulness. Officers and men were busy surveying routes for railways, constructing military roads, opening water routes, protecting the travelers and safeguarding the mails. They "held the trail through hunger, thirst, disease, wounds, disaster and the untold suffering." Their work was of the highest importance in the expansion and building of the nation, but it was of limited usefulness in training men in the science and manoeuvers of battle. Together with the Indian and Utah troubles, it had served to place out of the reach of the government nearly the whole of the small regular force that there was. Seventy-nine isolated army posts were scattered throughout a region of magnificent distances and poor communications, and in these in 1860 were one hundred and eighty-three of the one hundred and ninety-eight companies of the United States army. Seldom was so much as a battalion gathered in any one place. Fifteen companies were

[1] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, pp. 64-69.

[2] Upton, *op. cit.*, p. 224 (table).

[3] *Ibid.*

left to protect the Canadian border, the Atlantic coast from Maine to the Gulf, and man the twenty-three federal arsenals. In December, 1860, five of these were garrisoned in nine fortifications along the southern coast.[1] Some of the forts had no troops at all. An army of 16,402 officers and men was the guardian of three million square miles of territory, and more than 31,000,000 inhabitants.[2]

Even for the peace-time troubles with the Indians, General Scott complained the military force was inadequate. In his annual reports of 1857 and 1858, he stressed the need of a larger force, and President Buchanan, moved by the requests of the general and the pleas of the frontier people, recommended to Congress, through the War Department, that five additional regiments be raised. Congress, however, did not act.[3] It was a period of much talking on momentous questions inside of legislative halls and outside; the dangers confronting the country from sectional issues were emphatically stressed, but nothing was done to prepare for the very dangers men talked about. Perhaps at this time Congress feared to upset the *status quo* concerning the military lest it alarm the South. Perhaps it was politically inexpedient, or because the southern influence was so strong in the government. Whatever the underlying cause may have been, the United States army was utterly inadequate for any great emergency.

But even more startling than the inadequacy of the regular army was the dilapidated and unorganized condition of the militia, the body of citizenry upon whom Congress had so long relied. Nominally, they numbered more than 3,000,000 men. Actually, they were mostly unorganized, untrained, and unready for any real emergency. Save a few regiments

[1] Upton, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226; Ganoe, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

[2] *Final Report of the Provost Marshal General*, part i, p. 6.

[3] *Works of James Buchanan* (Moore, John Bassett, ed.), vol. xii, pp. 89-90.

in the large cities, they did not merit the name of a military force. A false security and blind confidence had lulled the people into seeming indifference. In 1834 the militia organization in Indiana had been abandoned, and the arms scattered and lost.[1] In Pennsylvania there were less volunteer militia companies in the years just preceding the war than ever before; the system was in contempt by reason of burlesques and a distaste for the service. Quakers, Mennonites, Presbyterians and Methodists strongly pervaded the state and looked with abhorrence on the mere trade of war.[2] In Iowa legislative committees in 1851 and 1857 made frivolous reports in mock solemnity of militia conditions in the state.[3]

As the eve of the Civil War drew near, in some sections an interest was shown in the militia; in others inattention and neglect continued.[4] Equipment was poor and improperly kept. An extravagantly fancy uniform for the commanding officer was often sufficient for an entire company, and where whole units were uniformed, gaudy regalia elegant for spectacle and parade, but useless for war, were the common thing. When many of these organizations appeared in the capital in 1861 they were hardly more than glittering mobs, undisciplined, untrained, ignorant of the problems of war.

[1] Foulke, William Dudley, *Life of Oliver P. Morton, Including His Important Speeches,* vol. i, p. 110.

[2] Egle, William H., *An Illustrated History of Pennsylvania,* p. 260.

[3] In 1851 a legislative committee reviewed the "military achievements recorded in the biblical, ancient and modern history," eulogized the sons of Iowa as soldiers born to whom any intimation of the necessity of militia training was an insult to their understanding of military science. The committee report of 1857 assured the legislature that a thorough investigation had been made of "big guns, little guns and pop-guns," and that the state arms were "in a state of safe preservation somewhere," where it was hoped they would remain. *Iowa and the War* (Shambaugh, Benjamin F., ed.), vol. i, pamphlet No. 2, Briggs, John E., "Enlistments from Iowa during the Civil War."

[4] Smith, Paul Tincher, "The Militia of the United States from 1846 to 1860." *Indiana Magazine of History,* vol. xv, p. 46.

The arms furnished to the states by the War Department varied widely in quality and in kind. The Ordnance Bureau in the late fifties was changing the types of rifle, cannon and powder, and the old models of muskets and cannon were passed off on the states in filling their annual quotas of arms. While some of the states called annually for their share and a few overdrew their quotas, others did not bother to draw at all. As the arms differed in quality, so the care of them differed in the states. Arsenals, in most cases, were provided, but these were frequently old buildings and ill-equipped.[1] It was evident to those who cared that the militia in an emergency was not to be relied upon very strongly.

In the War Department the situation was no better than in the army or the militia. Here again, long years of peace had produced a lethargic spirit. In addition to the office of the Secretary of War, there were eight bureaus, the Adjutant-General's, Quartermaster, Subsistence, Paymaster, Medical, Engineer, Topographical Engineer, and Ordnance. These were administered by military officers, all of whom, with one exception, had been in the service since the War of 1812, or earlier.[2] Several had held their executive posts for decades; they were old, mechanical in routine, effectively bound up in the precious red-tape and regulations which were the fruit of quiet days. A meticulous army-like order of things obtained in a time when efficiency experts were unknown. Employes arrived for duties at about eight-thirty in the morning and retired in the middle of the afternoon.[3] A few clerk, messengers and laborers made up the

[1] *Indiana Magazine of History*, vol. xv, p. 36.

[2] *Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military and Naval in the Service of the United States*, 1859, pp. 102-104; Heitman, Francis B., *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, vol. i, *loc. cit.*

[3] Estimated on the basis of office hours at an earlier time, and a change made by Secretary Cameron. No definite information could be found.

force of a bureau. In the office of the Secretary and in the various bureaus there were in 1859 ninety employes, of whom the great majority came from the District of Columbia and the South.[1] The following year three temporary clerks were added.[2] A few of the clerks had served for thirty years or more, and many of them for fifteen or twenty years. Secretaries and chief clerks might come and go, but clerks remained for decades.[3]. In the department at large, a force of 248 employes, exclusive of those of military rank, was maintained, located in the various depots scattered about the capital and other cities.[4] Employes in these places were usually under the charge of army officers, who in turn reported to their respective bureau chiefs in the War Department.

There were no modern conveniences for expediting office work. Typewriters were unknown; shorthand was apparently not used. Letters were neatly written out in long hand. Duplicates were either copied out into great ledgers or registered by means of letter-press books. Some communications were answered promptly; others lay for days or weeks before a reply was made. Much of the incoming mail was also entered into ledgers specially designated. These great leather-bound ledgers seemed indispensable. There were special ledgers for all sorts of things. In such an office program the main requisite for a clerk was a "good hand." The telegraph had not yet come into very common use in the department. Telephones were not yet invented; messengers

[1] *Register of Officers and Agents, loc. cit.*

[2] *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 12, 32nd Cong., 2nd Sess. Of these ninety-three employes, fifty-six were appointed from the District of Columbia, twelve from Virginia, one from Mississippi. Nine were from border states which stayed in the Union, eleven from northern states and four from the army.

[3] *Register of Officers and Agents,* 1830, 1839, 1845, 1859.

[4] *Ibid.,* 1859, pp. 104-108.

carried communications fom bureau to bureau, and from one office to another. The War Building, erected about forty years before, was small, of sufficient size perhaps for times of peace but inadequate when the war came.[1]

Small as the military establishment was, the Senate on December 11, 1860, passed a resolution instructing the Committee on Military Affairs, Jefferson Davis, chairman, to inquire whether the expenses of the military department could not be further reduced without detriment to the public service.[2] The chiefs of the bureaus in all but two instances replied that nothing could possibly be dispensed with or reduced.[3] Indeed, early in January, 1861, the quartermaster-general complained that under the existing law the number of clerks was insufficient for the prompt discharge of the various duties of his office.[4]

The southern influence had been for many years exceedingly strong in the government, and in the War Department it was well intrenched. From the beginning of President Taylor's administration in 1849 to the end of 1860 there had been four Secretaries of War; all came from the South. Jefferson Davis and John B. Floyd controlled its affairs for nearly eight years,[5] and even after leaving the War Department the influence of Davis was powerful, for he headed the

[1] Ingersoll, Lurton Dunham, *History of the War Department of the United States,* pp. 109-110.

[2] Jefferson Davis to Floyd, Dec. 13, 1860, War Department Files, MSS., Letters Received, Adjutant General's Office. Cited hereafter as War Department Files.

[3] *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* ser. i, vol. i, pp. 16-21. See Maynadier to Floyd, Dec. 19, 1860, pp. 18-19, and Cooper to Floyd, Dec. 26, 1860, p. 20. *Official Records* cited hereafter as *O. R.*

[4] Johnston to Holt, Jan. 8, 1861, Letters and Reports to the Secretary of War, &c., No. 5, MSS., Quartermaster-General's Office, Fort Myer, Maryland.

[5] Davis served from 1853 to 1857. Floyd succeeded him and remained in office until Dec. 29, 1860.

Senate Committee on Military Affairs. That some of the southern leaders hoped for the assistance of the Secretary of War in case of disunion appeared as early as the election campaign of 1856. At that time Senator Mason of Virginia wrote Secretary Davis urging that Governor Wise's request for percussion muskets in exchange for the old flint muskets "on fair terms of difference" be acceded to, even if necessary to resort to "liberal construction" to effect the bargain. Assurance was given that Virginia, having more arms than the other southern states, would divide in case of need. It was Mason's opinion that in the event of Frémont's election, the South should not pause, but proceed at once to "immediate, absolute, and eternal separation." [1]

As time passed on, the secession movement developed in the South, sponsored by secret societies and southern state officials, while in Washington there were men in Congress and in the departments who were ready to subvert, or were actually engaged in subverting the governmental structure. Indeed, it has long been charged that three members of President Buchanan's Cabinet shared in this work, of whom one was the Secretary of War,[2] but actually, Floyd does not appear to have been a secessionist until late in 1860.[3] He belonged to the Virginia state-rights group, believed in secession as a right, but professed opposition to its practical application. His opposition to secession, however, seems to have been dictated more from expediency than from conviction of principle.

Although he may not have played an active part in undermining the government, he was at least a quiet and effective accomplice. Certainly he was aware of what was happening

[1] J. M. Mason to Davis, Sept. 30, 1856, quoted in Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, vol. ii, p. 300.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 314; McLaughlin, Andrew C., *Lewis Cass*, p. 334.

[3] *Cf. infra*, pp. 35, 39-40.

in the South and of the critical situation which was arising, yet he did practically nothing to put his department in a condition to meet the emergency. He knew very well that the handful of soldiers in the East at the time could not cope with a civil war; that a few companies could not hold the southern fortifications and government property against armed resistance, but he did not raise his voice in protest against the inadequacy of the army.

General Scott stood alone in his plea for more men. He had for some time suggested and urged proper measures to vindicate the laws and protect the federal property without waging war or acting in a manner offensive to any state, but his views received no attention. The President heard him "with due friendliness and respect," but the War Department was "little communicative," and attempted to keep him in ignorance of matters regarding the Charleston forts.[1] Communications from Major Robert Anderson at Charleston Harbor, which properly should have been transmitted to the War Department through the headquarters of the army, were ordered by Secretary Floyd to be sent only to the adjutant-general or direct to the Secretary.[2] As a consequence General Scott was neither able to advise Major Anderson nor to act in accordance with the critical situation which was arising at that point.[3]

There had been little intimate contact and relationship between the general-in-chief and the administrations for many years. Because of ill-feeling between President Taylor and Scott, the latter maintained headquarters in New

[1] Scott (by G. W. Lay) to D. E. Twiggs, Dec. 28, 1860, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 579-580; Memorandum of Scott to Floyd, Dec. 28, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 112; Scott's "Views," Oct. 29 and 30, 1860, *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 18, 1861; Scott to Editors, *ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1862.

[2] Cooper to Anderson, Nov. 23, 1860, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 76.

[3] Scott to Buchanan, Dec. 27, 1860, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 111; Scott (by Lay) to L. Anderson, Dec. 29, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 114.

York rather than in the capital, and this he continued to do, with the exception of two brief periods, until near the end of Buchanan's term when his presence was needed in Washington. With Secretary Floyd carrying on army affairs without consulting him, Scott, always a strict and proper soldier, felt unauthorized to interfere.[1] Until late in December, 1860, the control of the military was firmly gripped in the hands of Floyd. It was within his power to help or harm the government.

Aside from political reasons, Floyd had little to recommend him for the important place of Secretary of War. His appointment is difficult to explain. Rhodes says his "chief recommendation seemed to be that he belonged to the first families of Virginia."[2] Floyd had been a strong supporter of Douglas for the Democratic nomination in 1856, and it may have been that in his selection, Buchanan was seeking to win the cooperation of the Douglas group for his administration. Floyd's term as governor of Virginia had not been above reproach. Charges were made that he had prostituted the public patronage for private interests, that he was involved in frauds in New England and Virginia banks, and in infamous collusion in the plans for the erection of a monument to George Washington in Richmond.[3] Political principles hung loosely upon him; his private business affairs were always in confusion, and during his Secretaryship those of the War Department were brought into a similar condition. He seemed utterly incapable of systematic management, lacked a clear understanding of things that ought to be done and had an imperfert conception of what

[1] Wright, Marcus Joseph, *General Scott,* p. 292; Scott (by Lay) to Twiggs, Dec. 28, 1860, *O. R., loc. cit.,* pp. 579-580; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.,* vol. ii, p. 347.

[2] Rhodes, James Ford, *History of the United States,* vol. ii, p. 202.

[3] *New York Times,* Jan. 8, 1861.

had already been done. He was thoroughly reckless of public funds,[1] headstrong, bold and intolerant of counsel when at fault. For some time previous to the difficulties at Charleston Harbor his views generally had ceased to have much influence on the President or his Cabinet. They bore his shortcomings with impatience, and the President suffered much embarrassment and vexation because of his maladministration.[2]

Had Buchanan been a man of great vigor and force he would have taken the control of military affairs from his incompetent Secretary. The situation had for some time been growing increasingly acute. A man of scrupulous honesty, unquestioned loyalty to the Union, executive ability and dynamic energy was indispensable for the War Department. Joseph Holt, who replaced Floyd for the last two months of Buchanan's term, was such a man, but the change came too late to effect much good. In hanging on to a man whom he knew to be incapable, the President committed a serious blunder.

It is inconceivable that military affairs could have been in a much more unfortunate condition than they were as 1860 drew to a close: the regular army inadequate in size and scattered throughout western regions so remote that months would elapse before they could reach the scene of war; the militia in a state of almost complete decay as a ready fighting force; the War Department in old, cramped quarters, administered by a minimum force, cluttered with old men and headed by an incapable, unprincipled and irresponsible Secretary.

South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. The move was not unexpected yet it brought about

[1] *Cf. infra*, pp. 37-39.

[2] Black, Chauncey F., *Essays and Speeches of Jeremiah S. Black*, p. 12; Buchanan to Scott, *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 28, 1862.

a critical state of affairs, particularly in relation to the forts in Charleston Harbor. Should they be reinforced or not? If they were, what would be the consequences? These questions had been agitating the administration for some time.

General Scott in his "Views" of October 29, 1860, had said of the southern forts: "In my opinion all these works should be immediately so garrisoned as to make any attempt to take any one of them, by surprise or *coup de main,* ridiculous," but he admitted there were but five companies available for use.[1] Colonel Gardner in command of Charleston Harbor, on November 5, 1860 asked for reinforcements,[2] and Major Fitz-John Porter, a special agent sent to Charleston, on November 7 urged the same thing.[3] Two weeks later Major Anderson who had just succeeded to the command of the Charleston forts wrote that "Fort Sumter and Castle Pinckney *must* be garrisoned immediately if the Government determines to keep command of this harbor." At least two companies were needed for Sumter, half a company under a judicious commander for Pinckney and some reinforcements for Fort Moultrie which he was then occupying. With the three works well garrisoned and supplied, he could then hope there would be no bloodshed and no attempt on the forts by South Carolina.[4]

But the administration did not act as the Major requested even though his wants were few. At this time they could have been filled. Evidently pressure from southern members of the Cabinet and threats from South Carolina were deterrents. On November 24 R. B. Rhett wrote to the President that undoubtedly South Carolina would soon secede, that it rested with the President whether the event

[1] *National Intelligencer,* Jan. 18, 1861.

[2] J. L. Gardner to H. K. Craig, Nov. 5, 1860, *O. R.,* ser. i, vol. i, pp. 68-69.

[3] Porter to Cooper, Nov. 11, 1860, *ibid.,* pp. 70-72.

[4] Anderson to Cooper, Nov. 23, 1860, *ibid.,* pp. 75-76.

would be peaceful or bloody, and added: "If you send any more troops into Charleston Bay, it will be bloody." [1] On the 29th Governor Gist wrote that the state was determined to secede and that if Buchanan sent reinforcements, "the responsibility will rest on him of lighting the torch of discord which will only be quenched in blood." [2]

Early in December word came again that immediate action must be taken if the forts were to be saved. Anderson, after consultation with the mayor and prominent citizens of Charleston, wrote that all seemed determined, if possible, to prevent an attack by a mob on Fort Moultrie but they were equally decided that the forts "*must be theirs*" after secession.[3] Still nothing was done. Of these dispatches and the government's inactivity, Buchanan in his "Defense" takes no notice and gives no explanation. He admits elsewhere that he refused to send 300 men about December 15 to reinforce Anderson at Fort Moultrie. He declined because in his annual message of December 3 he had urged upon Congress the adoption of such amendments to the Constitution as those subsequently proposed in the Crittenden Compromise, adding "At that time high hopes were entertained throughout the country that these would be adopted." [4] If the succor of the Charleston forts was ever more than a possibility, it was at this early time.

Throughout November and December, however, a bitter struggle went on in the Cabinet between those favoring and those resisting the reinforcement of the forts. Cass, Holt [5]

[1] Rhett to Buchanan, Nov. 24, 1860, Buchanan, *Works,* vol. xi, p. 5.

[2] Gist to Trescott, Nov. 29, 1860, quoted in Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* vol. ii, p. 379. This letter was written at Trescot's suggestion and liberty given to show it to Buchanan.

[3] Foster to R. E. De Russey, Dec. 4, 1860; Anderson to Cooper, Dec. 6, 1860, *O. R., loc. cit.,* pp. 85, 87.

[4] Buchanan to Scott, *National Intelligencer,* Oct. 28, 1862.

[5] Then holding the position of Postmaster General.

and Black continually and earnestly pressed upon the President the necessity of sending aid. Thompson and Cobb strenuously opposed. Toucey was rather noncommittal but finally joined the opposition. Floyd at first professed to be in favor of properly manning the forts, wrote Secretary Black, but was soon taking steps to prevent the work from being carried out and finally came out openly against sending any assistance.[1] On December 12 Cass wrote out his resignation basing his decision to withdraw upon the unwillingness of the administration to take vigorous steps toward the better defense of Charleston Harbor. Buchanan in accepting it declared that the contentions of Cass had failed to convince the Cabinet of the necessity and propriety of such action. "The Secretaries of War and of the Navy," he declared, "through whom the orders must have issued to reinforce the forts, did not concur in your views; and, whilst the whole responsibility for their refusal rested upon myself, they were the members of the Cabinet more directly interested."[2] Although the President subsequently contended, as did Secretary Black, that Floyd was without influence in the administration, in this problem of prime importance, he appears to have been a determining influence!

[1] Black to C. R. Buckalew, Jan. 28, 1861, Black MSS.

[2] Cass to Buchanan, Dec. 12, 1860; Buchanan to Cass, Dec. 15, 1860, *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 7, 41st Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 2, 3. Black wrote to George Ticknor Curtis, Buchanan's biographer, Sept. 26, 1881, saying: "I was very anxious that Cass should not resign; so I think were all the rest of the administration. He communicated his intention first to me. I was satisfied that Ledyard, his son-in-law, had simply got scared and communicated his fright to the General. After some talk with both of them, Cass drew up his resignation, showed it to me, and admitted that the object of his retiring was that he might be outside when the structure should begin to tumble. When I communicated to Mr. Buchanan that General Cass meant to resign, he said that he expected something of that kind; didn't regard it as a calamity, but rather as a good riddance." Buchanan, *Works,* vol. xi, p. 64, footnote.

If there was a single member of the Cabinet who ought to have held out for the adequate garrisoning of the Charleston forts it should have been the Secretary of War. To his special keeping was entrusted the military property of the United States Government, and upon him lay the greatest obligation of energetic measures. Yet Floyd was blinded by expediency and state-rights principles. That he was not an avowed secessionist earlier than late December was apparently not because he was a great and devoted Unionist, but because he believed the same ends could be accomplished without declaring for such an extremity. In his diary of November 9, 1860, he recorded: "I expressed myself (in Cabinet meeting) decidedly opposed to any rash movement, and against the idea of secession at this time. I did so because I think that Lincoln's administration will fail, and be regarded as impotent for good or evil, within four months after his inauguration." [1] W. H. Trescot, Assistant Secretary of State and an active and ardent secessionist, declared in his record of the events of the time that Floyd believed "the Black Republican triumph only temporary, and that its success would be its destruction. As a matter of policy, therefore, he wished to fight in the Union, but he recognized the right of a State to secede, fully sympathizing with the South in the opinion that, as far as the North was concerned, enough had been done to justify any action the South might take, and was resolute that no force should be employed by the Government to restrain the action of an independent State." [2]

Governed by the belief that southern ends might be ac-

[1] Pollard, Edward A., *The Early Life, Campaigns and Public Service of Robert E. Lee,* p. 793. Floyd's fragmentary diary is published in this volume.

[2] Quoted in Crawford, Samuel W., *The History of the Fall of Fort Sumter; The Genesis of the Civil War,* p. 23.

complished peacefully, satisfied that no attack would be made on the forts, and convinced that reinforcements would lead to a collision, Floyd determined to prevent the sending of any additional men to Charleston Harbor. Anderson was to get along as best he could. In case of an attack he was ordered to defend himself "to the last extremity," and to resist any attempt to take possession of either of the three forts. In the event that he obtained any tangible evidence of a "design to proceed to a hostile act," he was authorized to take similar defensive steps.[1]

Trescot remained in close touch with the Secretary in November and December, received assurances that no reinforcements would be sent, and transmitted them to the South Carolina authorities.[2] The day after the Palmetto state seceded, Trescot interviewed Floyd. As a result of this meeting, he wrote to the newly inaugurated governor, Pickens: "No order has been issued that will at all disturb the present condition of the garrison, and while I cannot even here venture into details, which are too confidential to be risked in any way, I am prepared to say, with a full sense of the responsibility, that nothing will be done which will either do you injury or properly create alarm."[3] While such assurances were freely given, it must also be added to the credit of Floyd, he steadfastly maintained that he would not permit the forts to be taken by an unlawful force.[4] He

[1] Memorandum of verbal instructions given by D. E. Buell to Anderson, Dec. 11, 1860. Confirmed by Floyd, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, p. 117. Cooper to Anderson, Dec. 11, 1860, *ibid.*, pp. 82-83. Buchanan did not see the order calling for defense "to the last extremity." Learning of it later, he required that new instructions be sent calling for only reasonable efforts to save the forts. Floyd to Anderson, Dec. 21, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 103; also Buchanan to R. W. Barnwell *et al.*, Dec. 31, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 117.

[2] Crawford, *Fort Sumter, passim;* Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* vol. iii, pp. 4-9.

[3] Trescot to Pickens, Dec. 21, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 9.

[4] Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

must have known, however, as did the Southerners, how futile any defensive action on the part of the government would be with only a few small companies available.

When on December 27, 1860, the South Carolina forces did take forcible possession of two of the Charleston forts, Floyd was no longer willing to resist, and when the administration finally consented to attempt a reinforcement of Anderson's little party he had ceased to be Secretary of War. The complexion of affairs had greatly changed in a very short space of time. The theft of $870,000 in Indian trust bonds to cover up irregular transactions of Floyd with the contracting company of Russell, Majors and Waddell had been brought to the attention of the President on December 22nd; Floyd had been informed that he ought to resign; Major Anderson had transferred his detachment from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter on December 26th, which the South Carolinians contended was a violation of an understanding reached between the President and their commissioners; the Unionist element in the Cabinet was acquiring a stronger influence over their chief.

The improper transactions of the Secretary of War dated back to 1858 when Russell, Majors and Waddell, under contract with the War Department for transporting supplies to the West, requested him to accept drafts in anticipation of services performed. The company had suffered as a result of the panic of 1857. Floyd acceded to their wishes and also wrote to various banks and individuals requesting the purchase or discount of these drafts. All of this was done without the knowledge of Buchanan, although in offering them for negotiation it was said they were issued with the approbation of the Attorney-General and the President. Upon learning of what was being done, the latter demanded that the practice be discontinued. Floyd so promised, but soon resumed it to a far greater extent than before, probably

because the position of the company was becoming increasingly critical.

In all, between six and seven millions of dollars worth of advance drafts, or acceptances, as they were called, were received by the Secretary of War. The exact amount was difficult to determine because of Floyd's laxity in business methods. It was his habit to receive acceptances at the department or at his home, or at whatever place he happened to be. A clerk in the War Department kept a registry of them on loose pieces of paper, as they were reported to him from time to time, but no other record of them was made.

So many of these acceptances were in circulation that by the summer of 1860 it became difficult to negotiate them and there was danger of their going to protest. Such an event would have been disastrous for both the contractors and the Secretary, for the improper dealings would have been exposed. Recourse was therefore had to one Godard Bailey, a clerk in the Interior Department in charge of Indian trust bonds, and a kinsman of Floyd. "To protect the character of Governor Floyd, and to save him from the dishonor and retirement from the Cabinet that would be necessarily incident to the protest and discovery of the acceptances," Bailey turned over to William H. Russell of Russell, Majors and Waddell in the course of a few months 870 Indian trust bonds of $1,000 denominations, receiving in exchange War Department acceptances. In December, Bailey, alarmed at his own indiscretion, wrote out a confession of his misdeeds, which was handed to the Secretary of the Interior, Thompson, on the night of December 22, while Thompson was at the Executive Mansion.[1]

[1] This account of the trust bonds transactions is based upon *House Report* No. 78, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., Committee report, pp. 1-20; testimony, *passim;* appendix. Buchanan, *Works,* vol. xii, pp. 164-167; Rhodes, *History of the United States,* vol. iii, pp. 123-125. A special committee of the House, appointed on Dec. 24, 1860, made an investigation of these

The whole proceedings from beginning to end were extraordinary, unprecedented and illegal. Senator Benjamin had previously informed the Secretary of War that he was acting imprudently, and the President had told him before that such practices had no legal sanction.[1] Upon learning on December 22 of the continued issuance of the acceptances and their substitution for the trust bonds, Buchanan was astonished. Subsequently, he wrote: "I took immediate measures to intimate to him, through a distinguished friend,[2] that he could no longer remain in the cabinet, and that he ought to resign." [3] He should have been promptly dismissed. But no immediate resignation from the incompetent Secretary was forthcoming, although the President expected it hourly.[4]

Buchanan and Black believed it was this embarrassing financial situation which suddenly converted Floyd from a pronounced opponent into an avowed advocate of secession.[5]

transactions. It characterized them as "unprecedented in their character, and remarkable for alternate exhibitions of fraud and folly," *Report* No. 78, p. 20, and denounced Floyd's actions as incompatible "with purity of private motives and faithless to public trusts . . .", *ibid.*, p. 19. The investigation demonstrated, said the committee, Floyd's recklessness in his official conduct, his inattention and an ignorance of the details of departmental affairs. *Ibid.*, p. 18. Secretary Black said of the whole affair: "Taken together, it is the most stupendous fraud that has ever been perpetrated in this country." Black to Buckalew, Jan. 28, 1861, Black MSS. Buchanan ordered an indictment of Floyd. Two indictments were brought, one for conspiracy to defraud the government, the other for malfeasance in office. But there was insufficient evidence to sustain the first, and a *nolle prosequi* was entered. The second was quashed on a technicality. Black, *Essays and Speeches,* p. 266; Buchanan, *op. cit.,* p. 165; *New York Herald,* Mar. 21, 1861.

[1] *House Report* No. 78, *loc. cit.,* pp. 18-19. Buchanan, *op. cit.,* pp. 166-167.

[2] Vice President Breckinridge, a kinsman of Floyd.

[3] Memorandum on Floyd's resignation, Buchanan, *op. cit.,* pp. 166-167, footnote.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 165; Black to Buckalew, Jan. 28, 1861, Black MSS.

It is difficult, however, in dealing with such an unstable person to determine with exactness when he ceased to be loyal and when he became a disunionist.[1] His course was usually governed by the winds of personal fortune. At any rate, from this time forward he began to fraternize intimately with those pressing for secession.[2]

The removal of Major Anderson from Fort Moultrie to Sumter provided him an occasion to retire from office with a flourish. Although the major had acted in accordance with Floyd's own instructions of December 11, Floyd appeared uninvited in the Cabinet meeting of December 27, and in a discourteous tone read a paper declaring that the commander's action had violated a solemn pledge between the government and South Carolina and demanded that the garrison be withdrawn from Charleston Harbor altogether.[3] The President was astounded. He had never considered such a step. Two days later he received from Floyd an offensive letter tendering his resignation as Secretary of War, which stated: "I can no longer hold it, under my convictions of patriotism, nor with honor, subjected as I am to the violation of solemn pledges and plighted faith."[4] His resignation was promptly accepted. At last the War Department was purged of an unworthy public officer.

Floyd's failings were many, his sins of omission and commission were numerous, but of one group of often repeated charges he was not guilty. There is no sound basis in fact

[1] That Buchanan had some doubts as to when Floyd became disloyal is evidenced in a letter to Black, September 12, 1861, in which he said: "It is quite evident that Floyd did not begin to play the ——— until the last of October, 1860." Black MSS.

[2] Buchanan to J. B. Blake, Feb. 26, 1862, Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xi, p. 257; Black to Wilson, *Galaxy*, vol. xi, p. 259.

[3] Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 166; Memoradum, *ibid.*, pp. 166-167, footnote.

[4] Floyd to Buchanan, *ibid.*, p. 168, footnote.

for the accusations that he shipped to the southern arsenals and depots great stores of federal arms where they could be seized and used against the United States Government, nor that he sold large quantities of them at low prices to agents and governors of the southern states, nor that he resorted to extraordinary practices in favoring the South in delivering the arms quotas to the states in 1860. Few canards in our history after exposure have been more persistently restated than these.[1] That they gained headway, however, is not surprising. Floyd had not enjoyed much public confidence and his service in the War Department had contributed nothing to his support. Again, rumors and propaganda travel rapidly in war-time; they are quickly seized upon, accepted on faith and relinquished slowly.

Perhaps no one is more responsible for the arms stories than Floyd himself. Soon after he returned to his home, in addressing a Virginia audience, he declared: "I undertook so to dispose of the power in my hands, that when the terrific hour came, you and all of you, and each of you, should say, 'This man has done his duty.'"[2] If this was his intention it was just one more piece of work which he

[1] The story of Floyd's alleged treachery received considerable attention in the press of the time. Secretary Cameron attempted to make a case of bad faith against him, and President Lincoln's message to Congress on July 4, 1861, stated: A disproportionate share of the Federal muskets and rifles had somehow found their way into these States and had been seized to be used against the Government. In his famous controversy with Buchanan in 1862, General Scott also reiterated the charge. *New York Times,* Jan. 8, 1861, Feb. 9, 1862; *New York Herald,* Oct. 24, 1861, Aug. 6, 1862; Cameron's Report, July 1, 1861, *Sen. Exec. and Miscel. Docs.* No. 1, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 26-27; President's Message, *O. R.,* ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 311-312. Scott to Buchanan, *National Intelligencer,* Nov. 13, Dec. 6, 1862. Subsequent to the war and even down to the present time, publications have restated the charge, yet produced no conclusive evidence to substantiate it. The most notable instance is Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* vol. ii, pp. 319 *et seq.;* vol. iii, pp. 127-128.

[2] *New York Times,* Jan. 21, 1861.

did poorly, but his blatant outburst was probably nothing more than self-glorification and an attempt to ingratiate himself and gain influence with the southern leaders, among whom he had heretofore had but little standing.[1]

Shortly before Floyd retired from the office of Secretary of War, the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives called upon him to produce information as to the distribution of arms made since January 1, 1860, but he made no reply, although the Ordnance Bureau furnished him the data.[2] Immediately after his retirement the House authorized an investigation and a thorough inquiry resulted. The report of its findings makes no specific statement as to whether Floyd was guilty of misusing his trust, but the evidence brought forward in every instance except one, the shipping of heavy ordnance from Pittsburgh, cleared Floyd of the charges made.[3]

It is true that on December 29, 1859, more than ten months before Lincoln's election, he did order to southern arsenals for storage 105,000 percussion muskets and 10,000 rifles of an old model.[4] The order was carried out by patriotic officers of the Ordnance Bureau and Quartermaster Department early in 1860.[5] All of the muskets were of a type which had been condemned as unserviceable and offered

[1] Curtis, George Ticknor, *Life of James Buchanan, Fifteenth President of the United States,* vol. ii, p. 306.

[2] Resolution of the Committee on Military Affairs, Dec. 18, 1860; Maynadier to Floyd, and enclosures, Dec. 21, 1860, War Department Files, MSS.; *Cong. Globe,* 36th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 221.

[3] *Ibid.,* B. Stanton to Holt, Dec. 31, 1860, War Department Letters, 1860, Ordnance Office Files, MSS. Cited hereafter as Ordnance Files. See also *House Report* No. 85, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 2-3, 24.

[4] *Ibid.,* pp. 2-3, 24; Craig to Floyd, Oct. 19, 1860; J. W. Ripley to Lincoln, July 4, 1861, Ordnance Files, MSS.; Craig to Holt, Jan. 15, 1861, *O. R.,* ser. iii, vol. i, p. 39.

[5] Craig to T. Jesup, Jan. 28, 1860, Press Letters, vol. x, MSS., Ordnance Office; Craig to Holt, Jan. 15, 1860, *loc. cit.*

for sale, and the rifles were of a model no longer manufactured.[1] Such weapons could have been of but limited usefulness. If Floyd's intentions were to aid the South in preparations for war, it is difficult to see why he did not send guns of real practical value.[2] From this time forward no further shipments of small arms were made for storage in the South by order of the Secretary of War or any southern sympathizer in the department.[3] There could have been no clandestine removal of them for Colonel Henry K. Craig, the loyal chief of ordnance, admitted that no such act could be committed without the knowledge of the officer in charge of the bureau.[4] Even with the 115,000 arms sent, the seceded states had no more than would have been their due had a distribution been made on the basis of population.[5]

[1] Buchanan, *Works*, vol. xii, pp. 206-207.

[2] Jeremiah S. Black in replying to Senator Wilson said: "*These arms were all worthless and unserviceable.* We had 500,000 of them. They cumbered the Northern arsenals, and could not be used; a law had been passed to authorize the sale of them; they were offered for years at two dollars and fifty cents apiece, about one-tenth the price of a good gun, and they could not be got off. Twice a considerable number were sold, but the purchasers upon further examination refused to take them. Of these 500,000 condemned muskets, the Secretary of War, in 1859, ordered 115,000 to be sent South, doubtless for mere convenience of storage. To 'weapon the rebellion' with arms like these would have insured its destruction the instant its forces came into the presence of troops having the improved modern gun in their hands. Floyd could not have done a greater injury to the Southern cause than this would have been." *Galaxy*, vol. xi, p. 260.

[3] Craig to Holt, Jan. 18, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

[4] *House Report* No. 85, *loc. cit.*, p. 7.

[5] Buchanan to Black, Sept. 12, 1861, Black MSS. In October, 1860, there were in all the arsenals of the United States 523,307 arms, exclusive of those condemned. In the arsenals of the states which later seceded there were 164,223. However, 18,608 of these were at Harper's Ferry and Fort Monroe, and it is improbable that many of them fell into Confederate hands when the Unionists burned the former depository. Craig to Floyd, Oct. 19, 1860, enclosure A, Ordnance Files. (*See next page.*)

During 1860 the customary distribution of quotas under the law of 1808 was made to the states, North and South. In all 8,423 old-style muskets were delivered for the use of militia, of which the southern and southwestern states received 2,091, or less than one-fourth. Of the 1,728 new long-range rifles distributed, six of the southern states, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, received 758.[1] The others received none at all because they did not make application for them or because they accepted other ordnance in lieu of them.[2] Thus of the total distribution made for the year, the states which joined the Confederacy received less than one-third.

Another criticism of Floyd in this connection was that he favored the cause of the South by illegally making advance issues on the 1860 quotas. He did do this upon request for Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi despite protests from Colonel Craig, but it should also be stated that he granted the same favor to New York when a part of the 1860 quota was asked for, and similar advances were made to Pennsylvania in 1858, 1859 and 1860.[3] On the score of an unfair and treacherous division

At this time the total number of rifle muskets and percussion rifles of new models in all the arsenals was 28,403. Of these, 13,472 were in states which seceded, but included in this number were 4,518 at Harper's Ferry and Fort Monroe. Four of the states which seceded, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Alabama, had none at all. *Ibid.*

[1] Buchanan, *Works,* vol. xii, p. 202; Black to Wilson, *Galaxy,* vol. xi, p. 259.

[2] Holt to B. Stanton, Jan. 3, 1861, Reports to Congress, No. 10, War Office, MSS., Adjutant General's Office. It is significant that in October, 1860, Delaware, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Texas and the District of Columbia still had either all or a part of their quotas due them. Craig to Floyd, Oct. 19, 1860, enclosure B, Ordnance Files.

[3] *Ibid.;* W. H. Richardson to Floyd, June 21, 1860 (see endorsements), Ordnance Files; T. F. Drayton to W. H. Gist, Nov. 24, 1860, Drayton MSS., Confederate Archives, Adjutant General's Office; E. C. Wilson

of quotas, therefore, there is little or nothing in Floyd's conduct to indicate undue favoritism to the South or an attempt to arm the southern states at the expense of the federal government.

A third persistent charge against the Secretary was that he sold to southern states or their agents large quantities of serviceable government muskets and rifles at a small fraction of their true value for the deliberate purpose of preparing the South for the approaching crisis. This canard has no better foundation in fact than the others. The truth of the matter is that in 1857 inspecting officers of the Ordnance Bureau under the act of March 3, 1825 authorizing the sale of unserviceable ordnance, arms and stores, condemned 190,000 of the old muskets as unsuitable for the service. Attempts were made to dispose of large quantities of them by public sale, but the bids offered were so low that Colonel Craig recommended that none be accepted at less than $2.00 per musket. An effort was then made to dispose of them at private sale for the fixed price of $2.50. Such a procedure was unauthorized by statute, but Floyd seemed never to have strong scruples against violations, and in this instance probably felt that the ends justified the illegal means. However, so poor an opinion was held of the arms offered

to Floyd, Apr. 20, 1860; F. Townsend to Floyd, Sept. 29, 1860, Ordnance Files. Virginia in 1860, due to confusion at Harper's Ferry arsenal, was advanced 203 muskets on her 1862 quota. When apprised of this, Floyd refused an additional request for equipment. Richardson to Craig, Sept. 11, 1860 (see endorsements), Ordnance Files.

It should be stated that the practice of illegally issuing ordnance in advance was by no means confined to Floyd's administration of the War Department. It had been done under several former Secretaries. President Jackson in 1835, and President Pierce in 1855, ordered that it be stopped, and in his annual report of Nov. 10, 1846, the chief of ordnance admonished against its continuance. Craig to Gist, Nov. 15, 1860, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 5-6; Report of the chief of ordnance, 1846, *Ordnance Reports*, vol. iii, p. 123.

that only 31,610 of them were sold by this method in 1860.[1] The bulk of these went to the South but in some cases parcels of them were sold in the North. Of those disposed of in the former section, 11,000 came from Baton Rouge Arsenal, Louisiana, 4,030 from the St. Louis Arsenal and 5,000 from the Washington Arsenal, District of Columbia.[2] Since the secession forces stood a reasonable chance of seizing all of these depositories anyway, it is difficult to understand why Floyd should not have drawn upon northern supplies, if his purpose was traitorous, as has been charged.

In another instance Floyd bargained on November 22, 1860, to sell 100,000 old muskets to one A. A. Belknap, a man who claimed to be purchasing for the Sardinian government but was credited by Floyd's enemies with being a southern agent. On December 26, three days before he left office, Floyd declared that he had misunderstood the price offered, believing it to be $2.50 per musket instead of $2.15 as in the written statement, and consequently he declined to relinquish the arms unless the higher price was paid. Thus time was lost, the negotiations were not concluded before Floyd retired from the department, and when Joseph Holt took over the War Office, he declined to relinquish the arms even at the higher price.[3] Here again, it is not likely that Secretary Floyd would have permitted a small sum to stand in the way of a deal if his intentions were to aid the South. He was not without discernment and shrewdness; he undoubtedly knew the military needs of the South as well as the potentialities of the North. That he would have hesitated because of a small difference in price, if the arms were truly

[1] Buchanan, *Works*, vol. xii, p. 207.

[2] Craig to Holt, Jan. 21, 1861, sub-enclosure, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 52.

[3] A. A. Belknap to Floyd, Nov. 21, 1860 (see endorsements), Ordnance Files; *House Report* No. 85, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 2; *House Report* No. 16, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 19; Craig to Holt, Jan. 21, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

serviceable and his motives improper in the matter, is decidedly improbable and quite unlike the man.

On one occasion Floyd did dispose of arms when he knew that they might be used against the government, but here again there is evidence of a rather counteracting nature. In November, 1860, Floyd agreed to sell to Thomas Drayton, agent of South Carolina, at $2.00 each, 10,000 muskets which had been altered from flint to percussion, or at $2.50 if a smaller number were taken. One dollar extra per gun would be charged if the purchasers desired them rifled at government arsenals. About two weeks later, he informed the agent that on examination of an ordnance report he found the muskets agreed upon were not available for delivery as indicated, and suggested that smooth-bored muskets be accepted in their stead. Joseph E. Johnston, quartermaster-general and later a Confederate officer, believed them satisfactory for the state's purposes, and they were finally purchased through a New York banker of southern sympathies. However, Floyd declined to allow their transfer from the Watervliet arsenal until paid for as the law required, and steadfastly refused to sell 40,000 additional to the same intermediary.[1] Why he should have declined to turn over the second lot, if he was treacherous in regard to the first, is impossible to explain. Drayton appears also to have been commissioned to purchase muskets for Georgia, but there is nothing to indicate that any were sold to that state in 1860.[2]

The only ordnance transaction engaged in by Secretary Floyd which defies any satisfactory explanation was the ordering on December 20, 1860, of heavy artillery from

[1] Drayton to Gist, Nov. 3, 6, 19, 23, 1860, Drayton MSS.; Lamar to Floyd, Nov. 21, 1860; Floyd to Lamar, Nov. 24, 27, 1860, Ordnance Files, MSS.

[2] Drayton to Gist, Nov. 19, 1860, Drayton MSS.; Craig to Holt, Jan. 21, 1861, sub-enclosure, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 52.

Pittsburgh to the South. On that date he verbally requested Captain Maynadier, then acting chief of ordnance,[1] to send the cannon necessary for the fortifications necessary at Ship Island and Galveston. No written report of the order was made, and contrary to the usual custom, the order was given by the Secretary without information from the Engineer Department showing that the works were ready for any armament. The facts of the matter were that the Ship Island defenses would not be ready to receive their equipment for two years hence and those at Galveston for five years. Furthermore, the amount of armament needed for them had never been definitely decided upon by the proper board. Nevertheless, 124 pieces of heavy ordnance, entirely useless for the forts in question, were directed to be sent from the Allegheny Arsenal at Pittsburgh.[2]

The news of the proposed shipment spread rapidly in the city of Pittsburgh, excited popular indignation, and on December 25 the President received a telegram from a group of citizens requesting that the order be countermanded immediately. That evening Buchanan sent the communication to the Secretary, whose resignation he had asked for three days

[1] By a special order of November 17, 1860, Colonel Craig was relieved from duty in the Ordnance Bureau and ordered during the absence of the inspector of arsenals and armories to make an extensive tour of the western arsenals. By another special order Captain Maynadier was placed at the head of the Ordnance Bureau. Craig later charged that the change was made in order to carry out improper arms transactions. There is little foundation for the charge, however, for Maynadier remained loyal to the Union cause. The Ordnance Bureau files indicate that there had been friction between Floyd and Craig for some time, and the change was probably for that reason more than for any other. Craig was reinstated as chief by Holt. Floyd to Cooper, Nov. 17, 1860; Floyd to Craig, Nov. 17, 1860, Military Book No. 43, MSS.; Press Letters, vol. xii, p. 498, MSS.; *House Report* No. 85, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 8.

[2] Holt to Cameron and J. K. Moorhead, Jan. 11, 1861, Military Book No. 43; *House Report* No. 85, *loc. cit.*, p. 3; *House Report* No. 16, *loc. cit.*, pp. 16-18; J. E. Totten to Holt, Jan. 8, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 32.

previously, but gave no direction as to what should be done. Floyd resigned before the cannon were shipped, and on January 3, 1861, Holt, his successor, rescinded the order.[1]

One cannot but be impressed in nearly all that Floyd did with the looseness of his methods, his lack of judgment in caring for national interests and his frequent disregard of the law. Time and again he acted with the full knowledge that there was either a statute forbidding the action which he contemplated or that there was none authorizing the course he desired to pursue. But these seemed to count little with him.

Undoubtedly the position of Secretary of War was in many respects a trying one. A good deal of well-planned legislation was needed for the improvement of the department, the army and the militia, yet little could be obtained. The shortage in the early part of the war of first-class modern arms for the military was not because Floyd had conveniently stored them in the South, or sold them or issued them unfairly by giving the South more than its share. It was principally because Congress for years had failed to make adequate provisions. Just as it had neglected to place the army on a suitable footing, so it had omitted to appropriate sufficiently for equipping it. The government had machinery, shops and power to make 40,000 stand of arms per annum, yet the appropriations permitted the armories to turn out only 18,000.[2] In his annual report of October 31, 1860, Colonel Craig disclosed that only 17,300 muskets and rifles, plus accessories and implements for small arms, had been manufactured in the past fiscal year.[3] While such a rate of production was sufficient for the regular army as

[1] W. Wilkins *et al.* to Buchanan, Dec. 25, 1860; Buchanan to Floyd, Dec. 25, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 15; Holt to Cameron and Moorhead, *loc. cit.*

[2] *Cong. Globe,* 36th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 862.

[3] Craig's Report, Oct. 30, 1860, *Ordnance Reports,* vol. ii, p. 688.

it was then constituted, it was hopelessly insufficient if the militia were to be relied upon for support, and they most certainly were counted upon.

The failure of Congress to make suitable provision for the arming of the militia is nothing less than astonishing. The same amount of money was appropriated for that body in 1860 as was authorized in 1808, fifty-two years before. Although the population had quadrupled and the area of the nation had expanded enormously, $200,000 was still deemed a sufficient expenditure for arming them. The ordnance reports of 1859 and 1860 urged the need of legislation to increase the amount; the Secretary of War in his reports of the same years emphasized the necessity, but Congress was obdurate.[1] When the Army Appropriation bill was up for consideration in June, 1860, an amendment was proposed to increase the amount from $200,000 to $600,000, only to be voted down.[2] Senator Wilson of Massachusetts probably expressed the sentiments of the opposing majority when he declared in favor of equipping them with the old stock: "These arms were good enough to fight the Mexican War with; they have been good enough to fight the battles of the country in the past, and, I think, are as good to be distributed among the militia of the country, for the purpose for which the militia need to use them, as the improved arms that are now being made." [3]

[1] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.*, p. 862, appendix p. 11; *Ordnance Reports, loc. cit.*, p. 688; *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 2, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 11; *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 2, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 8.

[2] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.*, pp. 2793-2795. An amendment by Senator Wilson to distribute among the states and territories one-half of the old arms deposited in the armories was also voted down. On this proposal the vote of the southern senators was split. *Cong. Globe, ibid.* Under such a distribution the South would have gotten about 70,000 arms of the same kind as Floyd had sent South early in 1860. It is surely not fair to condemn Floyd for doing what Senator Wilson would have had done, had the vote of the Senate been different.

[3] *Cong. Globe, ibid.*, p. 2794.

The law of 1808 made no provision for supplying them with ammunition, and because of the great changes recently made in arms and ammunition, state authorities found it difficult to supply their militia with a suitable kind for the arms furnished. When the Ordnance Bureau, on request and by special authorization of the Secretary, occasionally supplied their needs at cost price, it had to be done without the sanction of law.[1] Again, when volunteer companies subsidized by state funds were unable to purchase guns from the national armories, they were obliged to buy from private agencies. Such arms as they obtained, if brought into federal service in the event of war, would be of little value since their calibre, as a rule, would not receive the ammunition which the government provided.[2] It was therefore advantageous that they should be equipped with weapons of the approved pattern, but Congress declined to see it in that light.

Nothing is more startling in the administration of the government in that dark period before the war than the persistent refusal and neglect of the national legislature to take proper steps to place the military of the United States on even a decent peace-time footing. No organ of the government was as responsible for the disgraceful unpreparedness when the war came as the United States Congress, not even the vacillating Chief Executive, not even the dismal failure, John B. Floyd.

It was hardly necessary for Floyd to have been an active secessionist. Events and circumstances were playing into the hands of the Southerners without it. It must have been perfectly apparent to him that the military was utterly unready for war and that President Buchanan had shown no great vitality and could be relied upon to do little or nothing.

[1] Craig to Floyd, Apr. 10, 1860, *Ordnance Reports, loc. cit.*, pp. 679-680.

[2] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.*, p. 862.

Buchanan seemed bewildered, yet was obstinate in his desire to maintain the *status quo* and seek a solution to the difficulties by some sort of compromise. With the added confidence that the Lincoln administration would soon collapse, and that if the war did come the Southerners could thrash the Unionists, Floyd could well restrain his acts and his sympathies and let the future take care of itself.

To some extent the spirit of the administration changed as the year 1861 began. An energetic northern group gained control in the Cabinet. Jeremiah S. Black was now Secretary of State, John A. Dix was soon to become Secretary of the Treasury, Edwin M. Stanton had succeeded to the office of Attorney General, and on December 31, 1860, Joseph Holt was transferred from the Post Office Department to the post left vacant by the withdrawal of Floyd two days before. Had these men been able to direct affairs in the last few months of 1860 the history of the period might well have been considerably different.

Holt stood out in refreshing contrast to his predecessor. Floyd was loud and boastful, while Holt was taciturn in the extreme, keeping his own counsel. The looseness in the former's business transactions was the very antithesis of Holt's, who was orderly, strict and rigidly scrupulous in his dealings. His judgment and patriotism would not permit him to grant favors which might be to any degree detrimental to the national interests. There was no temporizing for expediency's sake in his nature or his actions. He saw and analyzed clearly and acted with promptness and precision. If the prosecution of military affairs was less vigorous under him than it should have been, the fault lay with a restraining Presidential policy and a lethargic and unwilling Congress rather than with the new head of the War Department. Holt was in the very prime of life. He combined with physical strength great intellectual and polemic

ability. He had traveled widely, gained a distinguished reputation at the southern bar and enjoyed the confidence of the public. At the opening of his term, Buchanan had appointed Holt to be Commissioner of Patents; in March, 1859, the President made him Postmaster General, an office which he conducted admirably, and then transferred him to the War Office, first as Secretary *ad interim*, and on January 18, 1861 as Secretary of War.[1]

In the brief space of two months and under conditions such as existed, there was comparatively little that Holt could do. The desire of the President to do nothing which might further irritate an already highly sensitive situation no doubt had a profound effect upon Holt's work in the War Department. He was an unwilling victim of a tense and dangerous condition which had been created before he took the post, and the administration policy forced upon him a policy of "watchful waiting." To have withdrawn the arms sent South by Floyd was out of the question; to refuse to comply with the law in the distribution of the proper quotas of arms when called for would have laid him open to charges; to have withdrawn the bulk of the army from the West would have caused an uproar, for the assembling of a mere handful at the capital in February caused a Congressional inquiry.[2] The day when truly effective action could be taken without serious danger had passed. Opportunities which had been lost were now almost or completely impossible to regain.

[1] Buchanan, *Works*, vol. xii, pp. 93-95, 208; Crawford, *Fort Sumter*, p. 25; Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iii, pp. 89-90, 130-132. Although Holt was nominated and confirmed as Secretary of War on January 18, 1861, he did not take the oath until January 23. Holt's oath, War Department Files, MSS. Buchanan offered the post to John A. Dix early in January, but Dix declined it, refusing to serve in any Cabinet place except as Secretary of the Treasury. Dix, Morgan, *Memoirs of John A. Dix*, vol. i, p. 362.

[2] *House Journal*, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 298; *House Exec. Doc.* No. 82, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess.

In so far as he had the power and discretion to prevent new advantages to the opponents of the government, Holt acted firmly, positively and patriotically. No longer were states privileged to draw quotas of arms in advance of the year in which they were due.[1] No longer were northern or southern states or individuals within them permitted to drain the national arsenals by purchases of arms.[2] Information as to the plots and plans and armaments of forts and arsenals generously furnished under Floyd, was now refused to interested parties.[3] The making of sample arms at federal arsenals for the use of private and state armories was stopped as "contrary to regulations." All unexecuted orders for any pattern of arm except the latest rifle model were put aside in favor of turning out the maximum quantity of the latter.[4]

Close and harmonious relations between General Scott and the new Secretary were established at once and much good resulted. A picked company of men was ordered to Harper's Ferry to protect federal property from mob attack.[5] Senator Slidell's brother-in-law, Major Beauregard of Louisiana, who had been appointed by Floyd in November, 1860 as superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point, was removed on January 6, 1861.[6] Precautions were taken against treachery among the District of Columbia militia and the seizure of the well-stocked federal arsenal at St. Louis. A few companies of the troops available were

[1] Holt to J. T. Harris, Jan. 10, 1861, Military Book No. 43; Holt to J. J. Pettus, Jan. 14, 1861, Ordnance Files, MSS.

[2] Holt to J. M. Read, Jr., Jan. 23, 1861, Military Book, *loc. cit.;* Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[3] Holt to D. Clopton, Jan. 3, 1861, Military Book, *loc. cit.*, MSS.

[4] Craig to J. M. Mason, Feb. 13, 1861, Press Letters, vol. xiii, MSS.

[5] Cooper to H. J. Hunt, Jan. 3, 1861, *O. R.*, vol. li, part i, p. 309.

[6] King, Horatio, *Turning on the Light*, p. 57; Crawford, *Fort Sumter*, pp. 276-277.

concentrated at the capital as a measure of protection, and General Twiggs, a man of strong secession proclivities, was relieved of his command in Texas.[1] With the aid of Holt, General Scott gained Buchanan's permission to send succor to the feeble garrison at Fort Taylor, Key West, and a company to hold the ungarrisoned Fort Jefferson at Tortugas Island. Another body was dispatched to reinforce Fort McHenry at Baltimore. Still others were hastened to Fort Delaware, and defensive preparations were begun at Fort Monroe.[2]

In the War Department itself the Secretary made no changes in personnel. He reported that no removals nor additions were necessary for the prompt dispatch of business in his office, nor did the bureau chiefs feel the need of changes.[3] That Holt did not have full faith in his employes may be presumed, however, from the fact that as a precaution against the leakage of information he transacted all his important business at the office of General Scott.[4]

In these troublous days he was more than the departmental administrator. To a considerable extent he was the President's spokesman with the southern leaders, particularly in regard to the federal property in the South.[5] His legal knowledge and his penetrating insight gave to his contentions extraordinary force and logic; his sincerity and literary

[1] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (Johnson, Robert U., and Buel, Clarence C., editors), vol. i, p. 12; Nicolay and Hay, vol. iii, pp. 125-128, vol. iv, p. 184; Blaine, James, *Twenty Years of Congress,* vol. i, p. 280; Nicolay, John G., *Short Life of Abraham Lincoln,* p. 172; Special Order No. 22, *O. R.,* ser. i, vol. i, p. 584.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, vol. iii, pp. 134-135; Scott to Editors, *National Intelligencer,* Oct. 21, 1861.

[3] Holt to W. Pennington, Feb. 28, 1861, Reports to Congress, No. 9, MSS.

[4] *New York Tribune,* Jan. 9, 1861.

[5] See Holt to Fitzpatrick, Mallory and Slidell, Jan. 22, 1861; Holt to Hayne, Feb. 6, 1861, Military Book No. 43.

skill endowed his communications with a freshness and determination which those of Floyd never had. A better man could not have been selected for the War Office at the time, and his appointment reflects much to Buchanan's credit. It is only unfortunate that he was not placed there several months earlier.

On one issue, the most important of all, Buchanan and Holt had not been in agreement. This concerned Charleston Harbor. The obstinacy of the President in his determination not to reinforce the forts had long been a source of vexation to Holt. As Postmaster General he had fought unsuccessfully for it, and he took no responsibility for the failure to do so and the unfortunate consequences resulting.[1] But he was now anxious to make such amends as the time and critical circumstances permitted, and others stood with him.

On the day before Floyd retired, Scott had urged upon him once more that Sumter be retained and reinforced and that similar action be taken with other southern forts.[2] On

[1] Holt's letter to Buchanan on May 24, 1861, makes clear his position: "Col. Anderson's letters and those to him from the government during my brief connection with the War Dept., furnish, I think, a sufficient defence of the policy pursued at that time. I cannot say the same in reference to an antecedent period. You no doubt remember the character of Col. A.'s letters before he was forced to abandon Moultrie—also your extreme solicitude on the subject, & the disposition made of the question of reinforcement by Gov. Floyd.

"While the country will accord you a high patriotic purpose in the forbearing course you pursued, it has also, I am satisfied, arrived at the conclusion, from current events, that the policy was a mistaken one. The counsels under which you acted were sincerely confided in by yourself, but it is now shown that they were given by traitors, who in all they did & said acted in the interest of those who had resolved upon the overthrow of the govt. I am myself satisfied that had the same bold step been taken at Charleston in Nov. that has recently been taken at St. Louis, the revolution would ere this have been as dead as any antediluvian." Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xi, p. 196.

[2] Scott to Floyd, Dec. 28, 1860, Crawford MSS.

the day after Floyd's leaving, Scott appealed to the President for permission to send aid. Black also entreated that vessels be sent to Charleston, saying: "If this be done at once all may yet be not well but comparatively safe. If not, I can see nothing before us but disaster and ruin to the country." At last the President yielded and on December 31 preparations were ordered forthwith.[1] Three days later final action on reinforcement was taken,[2] action which undoubtedly was entered into with avidity by the general and the new Secretary of War.

On the night of January 5, 1861, the steamer *Star of the West* dropped down New York harbor with men, arms and ammunition. Her destination was Fort Sumter. At dawn on the morning of the 9th, she entered Charleston Harbor and headed for the fort. But the South Carolinians were ready. Fire was opened on the vessel from Morris Island and Moultrie; one shell struck her. Neither signal nor shot came from Sumter, so the *Star of the West* withdrew, returning direct to New York.[3]

The message from Holt informing Anderson of the sending of a relief expedition failed to reach him in time. Had it arrived he would have found himself clothed with power to open fire upon any guns which attacked the vessel or his post. As it happened he was without orders to guide him at this critical moment. He considered the action of the South Carolinians as an act of war, yet hesitated to take an unauthorized step which might immediately precipitate a

[1] Scott to Buchanan, Dec. 30, 1860; Scott to J. Dimick, Dec. 31, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 114, 119; Black's Memorandum for Buchanan, Dec. 30, 1860, Black MSS.

[2] Buchanan to J. Thompson, Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[3] Crawford, *Fort Sumter*, pp. 174-186; Capt. McGowan's Report, *New York Times*, Jan. 14, 1861, cited in Moore, Frank, *Rebellion Record*, vol. i, documents, p. 21; C. R. Wood's Report, Jan. 13, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 9-10; Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, pp. 173-174.

conflict. Unable to gain satisfaction from Governor Pickens, Anderson made a truce and the problem was referred to Washington, South Carolina sending her attorney general, Hayne, to demand the surrender of Sumter.[1] A new crisis had arisen. An act of war had been committed. What should now be done?

Two courses lay open to the President; he could terminate the truce upon notice and send reinforcements regardless of the consequences, or recognize it and begin fresh negotiations. He chose the latter. Anderson in his dispatches of December 31 and January 6 had assured the government that he could hold the fort against attack, and in the course of the month word came from both the commander and Captain Foster, engineer officer, that it was inadvisable to attempt relief at that time.[2] Furthermore, Hayne had been restrained by the southern Senators from presenting the state's demand so that negotiations might be conducted. The South was not yet ready for a conflict. The President refused under any conditions to enter into any agreement which would prevent him from reinforcing Sumter if called upon,[3] and in this undoubtedly Holt and his Unionist colleagues were insistent. Indeed, had it not been for the dispatches from the fort discouraging it, they would certainly have demanded that the President act in this regard at once. Holt made it perfectly clear to Major Anderson and the southern leaders that upon request from the fort vigorous efforts would be made to send any relief necessary.[4]

[1] Crawford, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-177, 187-197; Anderson to Pickens, Jan. 9, 1861; Pickens to Anderson, Jan. 9, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 134-135.

[2] Holt to Lincoln, Mar. 5, 1861, Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xi, p. 157; Anderson to Cooper, Jan. 6, 30, 1861; Foster to Totten, Jan. 30, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 133, 139, 159.

[3] Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, pp. 177-178; *House Report* No. 91, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 58 *et seq.*; Crawford, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-220.

[4] Holt to Anderson, Jan. 16, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 140; Holt to Fitzpatrick, Mallory and Slidell, Jan. 22, 1861, Military Book No. 43, MSS.

The conferences and communications went on, between Hayne and the Senators, and between the Senators and the President, but they were bootless. On the 31st of January Hayne presented the state's demand for the fort, and Holt, acting as the President's spokesman, on February 6 replied with a sharp, positive refusal to relinquish it, and put upon the state's authorities the responsibility for the war, should it ensue from an attack.[1]

Another month had passed; nothing had been accomplished in clearing up the Charleston Harbor problem. Indeed, the situation was worse than ever. South Carolina had been allowed to commit an act of war with impunity. In October, 1861, Jeremiah Black in condemning Buchanan for endorsing Lincoln's policy of going to war after the assault upon Sumter, wrote: "The fire upon the *Star of the West* was as bad as the fire on Fort Sumter; and the taking of Moultrie and Pinckney was worse than either. You know what I thought of these events at the time they occurred. If this war is right and politic and wise and constitutional, I cannot but think you ought to have made it." [2]

All the while secession was growing apace and without interruption. In most of the southern states federal property was being seized and nothing was done to prevent it. The President in his annual message of December 3, 1860, and in his special message of January 8, 1861, had declared it to be his right and his duty to employ military force to defend the public property against all assaults; [3] Secretary Holt also had written on January 15, that the President would protect all government properties if assailed "no matter from what quarter or under what pretext. . . . He

[1] Holt to Haynes, Feb. 6, 1861, Military Book No. 43.

[2] Black to Buchanan, Oct. 5, 1861, Black MSS.

[3] Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xii, p. 111.

could not escape from his constitutional obligation to defend and preserve them."[1] But these were mere words, gestures, which were not put into practice. Forts, arsenals, arms and other belongings of the United States had been in the possession of the secessionists since the beginning of the year, and after the declarations of Buchanan and Holt the seizures actually grew in numbers and in quantities.[2] The South could be bold in its seizures. There was little danger of opposition or punishment.

The inaction of the Secretary of War in all this was quite inconsistent with his past and subsequent views and conduct, and one cannot but feel that it was the result of factors over which he had no control, namely the President's policy and the negligence of Congress. Buchanan's passionate desire, first, last and times between, was to find and adopt "such a fair and honorable compromise as might prove satisfactory to all the States on the question of slavery in the Territories," and failing "to accomplish this object in regard to the seven cotton States, which there was too much cause to apprehend, then to employ all legitimate means to preserve and strengthen the eight remaining slave or border States in their undoubted loyalty."[3] His supreme object was the preservation of the Union, and he confidently believed that the application of force would wreck it.[4] Even if an adequate army had been at his command, it is very uncertain that he would have used it unless his Cabinet forced his hand.

Nor did Congress in these days show an inclination to

[1] Holt to Ellis, Jan. 15, 1861, Military Book No. 43.

[2] For a list of the seizures made, see McPherson, Edward, *A Political History of the United States of America during the Great Rebellion*, pp. 27-28.

[3] Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

[4] *Ibid.*; Buchanan to Holt, Mar. 16, 1861, Holt MSS.

alter the military status, although it knew as well as Buchanan that federal property in the southern states was being seized and that there were considerably less than one thousand troops available in the East to cope with the situation. On January 8th the President reminded its members that Congress was the "only human tribunal under Providence" having the power to meet the emergency.[1] Neither he nor Jeremiah Black believed the Militia Act of 1795 empowered the President to call forth the militia to repel insurrection against the United States and there was no other law on the statute books which did furnish the power.[2] A special committee of the House considered the matter, and on January 30 reported a bill enabling the President to call the militia or accept the services of volunteers to protect the government property and to "recover possession" of such as had been taken or might be taken.[3] But the bill was withdrawn on the very day it was presented and was never taken up again.[4] On February 18 another bill was reported, this time by the Military Affairs Committee, giving the President greater military power. No provision was made for apprehending property already seized, but the Militia Act of 1795 was widened to empower the Chief Executive to employ the militia and accept volunteers to suppress insurrection against the authority of the United States.[5] Once more the House refused to act and its consideration was postponed.[6] Congress like the President was in search

[1] *Cong. Globe,* 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 316; Buchanan, *op. cit.,* p. 136; Buchanan's Message to Congress, Jan. 8, 1861, Richardson, James D., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* vol. v, p. 657.

[2] Buchanan, *op. cit.,* p. 135.

[3] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.,* p. 645.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 646; Buchanan, *op. cit.,* p. 138.

[5] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.,* p. 1001.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 1232.

of a compromise, or else it was staking its hopes on the new administration soon to be inaugurated. Delay and inaction were in vogue.

Under such circumstances there was little for the War Department to do but wait for a change of policy. On the 30th of January, as the negotiations between the President and the southern Senators concerning Fort Sumter were dragging to a close, a conference between the Secretaries of War and the Navy, General Scott and Buchanan resulted in orders being given for an expedition to be prepared at New York to sail for Sumter on telegraphic notice.[1] Notice, however, was never dispatched, because the Peace Convention sponsored by Virginia soon went into session. The President took on fresh hope that a peaceful solution might be found by it and was anxious that no action should be taken which might interrupt or jeopardize its efforts for a compromise. It must be said, though, that he resolutely held himself free to reinforce Fort Sumter at any time, should Major Anderson request it.[2]

But the day when a small contingent could relieve the fort had passed. The South Carolinians had been busy strengthening their fortifications, and on February 5 Anderson reported that ". . . Even in their present condition, [they] will make it impossible for any hostile force other than a large and well-appointed one, to enter this harbor, and the chances are that it will then be at a great sacrifice of life." [3] No peace convention in search of a compromise held up the work of the secessionists in Charleston Harbor or elsewhere. The longer it remained in session the greater their powers of resistance would be, and the stronger the newly organized

[1] Buchanan to Holt, Jan. 30 and 31, 1861, Holt MSS.

[2] Buchanan to Holt, Mar. 16, 1861, *ibid.*

[3] Holt to Lincoln, Mar. 5, 1861, Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. xi, p. 157.

Confederate government would become. Time was precious to them. By the end of February, Major Anderson was convinced that a force of 20,000 men with naval cooperation would be necessary to relieve the fort—a force larger than the entire regular army at the time.[1] He assumed full responsibility for not having asked for reinforcements in January or February; he expressed no doubt but that Secretary Holt would have sent them at all hazards, but he was certain that such a step would have inaugurated civil war.[2] He, too, lived in hopes that peace might yet prevail.

The one bright spot of action in these last two months of Buchanan's term was Fort Pickens at the mouth of Pensacola Harbor. This strategic post had remained unoccupied until January 10, when Lieutenant Adam J. Slemmer with his small force forsook a less formidable position at Fort Barrancas in favor of it.[3] Upon hearing of this exploit, the government on January 24 dispatched the *Brooklyn* with men, supplies and equipment,[4] but before the reinforcements arrived the President had entered into a *quasi*-truce with southern Senators, an arrangement which lasted for the remainder of his administration. The Floridans were not to attack the fort, supplies only were to be landed and the *Brooklyn* and other vessels sent by the Navy Department were to remain in proximity to the post.[5] The southern

[1] Crawford, *Fort Sumter*, p. 283; Lincoln's Message to Congress, July 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 312.

[2] Anderson to a lady correspondent, Apr. 5, 1861, cited in Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

[3] Slemmer to Cooper, Jan. 10, 1861; Slemmer to Thomas, Feb. 10, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 334, 334-342.

[4] Thomas to Dimick, Jan. 21, 1861; Thomas to I. Vogdes, Jan. 21, 1861; Dimick to Thomas, Jan. 25, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 351, 352.

[5] Memorandum of Buchanan, 1861, Holt MSS.; Holt and Toucey to J. Glynn *et al.*, Jan. 29, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 355-356; Lincoln's Message to Congress, July 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 313.

Senators were agreed among themselves that Fort Pickens was not worth "one drop of blood at this time." As in the case of Sumter, they considered it of greater importance at the moment to set the Confederate government in operation than to acquire the post by force and perhaps bring on a conflict.[1]

The President too was satisfied to let things drift along, assured by agreement and truce that the *status quo* at Sumter and Pickens would last a few days longer, perhaps until after March 4. Compromise and peace were his passions; disunion and bloodshed, his horrors. There was comfort in the thought: ". . . I shall carry to my grave the consciousness that I at least meant well for my country." [2]

But all this must have been irritating to the energetic and patriotic Secretary of War—delay to the right of him, a truce to the left, rebellion ahead and a few troops behind. He must wait, wait till the 4th of March.

[1] Mallory and Yulee to M. S. Perry, Jan. 20, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, p. 445.

[2] Buchanan to Scott, *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 28, 1862; Buchanan, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 293.

CHAPTER II

Old Problems in New Hands

The anxiously awaited 4th of March finally arrived. Buchanan was as happy as a weary and worn old man could be. Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens were still federal possessions; hostilities had been averted; there was yet a chance for peace and compromise. He assured Lincoln that if he were as happy to assume the high office as he, Buchanan, was to retire from it, Lincoln was a very happy man. The inauguration having passed off without mishap, the ex-President withdrew to the rest and quiet of Wheatland. For better or for worse, the old problems were in new hands, but none could tell what the future would bring forth.

In the eventful weeks and days since his election in November, Lincoln too had been waiting and watching. What happened was of momentous consequence to him. What sort of a situation would face him in Washington? Would he find war or peace? Would there still be a way open for reconciliation, or would the South be irrevocably set upon building a government of its own with state-rights and slavery as foundation stones.

It was also of the highest importance that the President should have with him able men, men who enjoyed the public confidence, possessed foresight and judgment and administrative ability, men who, if possible, could and would bind up the sores of controversy and dissension and help to bring back into the Union the "wayward sisters" which had departed. To these men would be presented the old problems, and tough ones they were.

The careful selection of a Secretary of War was of greater moment at this time than ever before. Even more difficult than the task of reconciliation would be the mobilization, in the event of war, of a peaceful, industrious people into a vast military machine. The War Department would loom as the greatest department of the government; upon it to a large degree would depend the success or failure of the struggle. A Secretary of exceptional capacity would be required, a great organizer, a first-class business man and a leader of men. The problems which would arise would be the greatest which ever confronted a man in that office. Who then should be Secretary of War? Should Simon Cameron be given that place or should he not? There was a question, a vexing one, indeed.

The circumstances involved in the struggle for and against the appointment of Cameron form one of the most puzzling and interesting political chapters of the Lincoln administration, and in their intricacy and elusiveness are exceeded only by the mystery surrounding his retirement early in 1862. Some of the facts are quite clear, others seem irretrievably lost. It is plain, however, that no other appointment caused the President-elect as much concern as this one. The question arose early, became badly complicated and was settled finally only a few days before the inauguration.

In the Republican convention at Chicago in June, 1860, Cameron had been a candidate for the nomination for President. An endorsement of him had been wrung by his henchmen from the Pennsylvania state convention by a substantial majority.[1] While he probably never had any real hope of receiving the Presidential nomination, it undoubtedly did place him in a powerful position in the tumultous politics of his own state, and gave him special prominence for a

[1] McClure, Alexander K., *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, vol. i, pp. 391-395.

Cabinet post or other national honors in the event of Republican success. His strength in the Chicago meeting was never impressive, yet it was sufficient to give his managers, Alexander Cummings and John P. Sanderson,[1] real bargaining power, and at the right moment they made the most of it. At a time when there was a fair prospect of Lincoln's nomination, and yet the struggle against the Seward forces was regarded as uncertain, Sanderson conferred with one of the Lincoln managers, David Davis, and received from him assurance that in exchange for the support of the Pennsylvania delegates a place in the Cabinet would be given Cameron if Lincoln were elected.[2] Lincoln, however, had no knowledge of this arrangement at the time.

The claims of Cameron were presented early and a vigorous attempt made to win for him a high place in the new administration.[3] This was facilitated by Lincoln's desire to include in the Cabinet his important rivals in the nominating convention, and by the demands of the protectionist interests in Pennsylvania who wanted control of the Treasury Department.[4] Near the end of December, Cameron was invited to Springfield, and on the 30th and 31st conferred with

[1] Cummings in 1860 was the editor of the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.* Sanderson was an ex-senator of the Pennsylvania legislature. Later he became editor of the *Philadelphia Daily News.*

[2] Herndon, William and Weik, Jesse, *Life of Lincoln,* vol. ii, p. 181; McClure, Alexander K., *Lincoln and Men of War Time,* p. 139; McClure, *Old Time Notes,* vol. i, pp. 407-408. It was not difficult to swing the Pennsylvania vote to Lincoln for the Curtin and Wilmot factions in the state were already kindly disposed toward him. McClure to Ward Lamon, May 8, 1871, Black MSS.; McClure, *Lincoln,* pp. 30-31, 35-36.

[3] As early as November 27, 1860, Lincoln wrote to Hannibal Hamlin, saying he had received letters from "very strong and unexpected quarters in Pennsylvania urging General Cameron to a place in the Cabinet." *Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Nicolay, John G. and Hay, John, editors, Gettysburg edition), vol. vi, p. 72.

[4] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* vol. iii, pp. 354-355.

the President-elect, receiving from him a note which stated that at the proper time, Cameron would be nominated for either the Treasury or War Department, which of the two had not yet been definitely decided.[1]

Cameron's enemies in Pennsylvania upon learning of his going to Springfield set out to thwart his ambitions. Alexander McClure, a prominent politician of the opposing faction, and chairman of the State Central Committee, telegraphed to Lincoln opposing the appointment. Lincoln replied requesting him to come to Springfield, and armed with letters from such men as Governor-elect Andrew Curtin, David Wilmot and Thaddeus Stevens, he set out. McClure spent several hours with Lincoln and received a promise that the appointment would be reconsidered. The upshot of the matter was that Lincoln wrote to McClure saying that if specific charges were made against Cameron and proof produced, he would discuss the subject further. McClure declined for "obvious reasons." On January 3, however, the offer to Cameron was withdrawn, partly because of the interview with McClure, Lincoln admitted, but more especially because of a "more potent matter" wholly outside of Pennsylvania which he did not feel at liberty to specify.[2] On the same day, Salmon P. Chase was sounded out as to whether he would accept the Secretaryship of the Treasury if it should be offered him.[3]

But the Cameron episode had only begun. The news of what had occurred spread rapidly. His friends redoubled their efforts to win back for him what had been lost, and his enemies were almost equally persistent in their determination to crush him. Cameron kept his temper, but could not

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iii, pp. 355-356.

[2] McClure to Lamon, May 8, 1871, Black MSS.; Going, Charles B., *David Wilmot*, p. 549; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-357.

[3] Schuckers, J. W., *Life of Salmon P. Chase*, p. 201.

conceal his chagrin; Pennsylvania was in a political ferment, and the railsplitter of Springfield found himself in an uncomfortably tight place.[1] Throughout the month of January, letters and testimonials poured in upon Lincoln from Pennsylvania and elsewhere. They came from persons of all ranks and classes, from editors and politicians, from the clergy, the office-holder and the plain citizen. Some were bitter in their attacks charging Cameron with unfitness and corruption, but it was soon seen that in spite of the allegations, specific charges and conclusive proof were conspicuously missing. On the other hand, for every letter against him there were three in his favor, testifying to his honorable character, integrity and upright public service, and endorsing him for high place in the administration councils.[2] On January 7 Lincoln wrote to Lyman Trumbull that Cameron was more amply recommended for a Cabinet post than any other man.[3] Delegation after delegation visited Springfield and the cry was "Cameron, Cameron!"[4]

His vindication seemed complete and undoubtedly the President-elect was duly impressed and satisfied with Cameron personally, but the problem was of wider scope than that. There were significant political aspects to be considered. Lincoln felt Pennsylvania was entitled to a Cabinet office, and the zeal for other men of that state was nothing in comparison to the enthusiasm for Cameron. Besides, Lincoln had fixed upon Seward, Chase and Bates, his

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp 360-361.

[2] *Ibid.*, E. B. Washburne expressed the feelings of Cameron's opponents when he wrote: "The probability is that Lincoln's administration is likely to escape a great calamity which threatened it—what I mean is, that Cameron will *not* have a place in the cabinet...." Washburne to Chase, Jan. 10, 1861, Chase MSS.

[3] Lincoln to Trumbull, Jan. 7, 1861 (very confidential), *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln* (Tracy, Gilbert A., ed.), pp. 173-174.

[4] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, vol. ii, p. 114.

convention competitors, for places, and to leave out Cameron would disgrace him and perhaps alienate the support of Pennsylvania.[1] Added to this was the fact that the industrial interests there were already protesting against Chase, a former Democrat and low-tariff man, being placed in the Treasury Department. Would they stand for the omission of Cameron, who had long been a bulwark of protectionism and a representative of the business elements? Could Lincoln succeed if that state opposed the administration? These were important questions and they bothered him.[2]

There was also to be considered the lively factional rivalry going on between the Seward and Chase forces for ascendancy in the coming administration. Indeed, the Seward men were bitterly opposed to Chase's being in the Cabinet at all.[3] Gideon Welles, a shrewd political observer but very unsympathetic toward Seward, believed that late in the summer of 1860 Lincoln's managers, David Davis and Swett, had clandestinely and without Lincoln's knowledge met with Cameron, Weed and others at Saratoga and consigned the Treasury Department to Cameron. He also thought that Seward's friends calculated that through Cameron's influence they could conciliate and consolidate Pennsylvania and New York for future party operations, not only in the Lincoln administration but afterwards. Chase was an obstacle to the success of this program, and there was no denying nor forgetting the fact that he had contributed greatly to Seward's defeat in Chicago.[4] If he could not be kept out of the Cabinet, then Cameron certainly must be brought in to strengthen the Seward group. That Seward wanted him

[1] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, vol. ii, p. 114.

[2] *Ibid.*; Lincoln to Trumbull, *Uncollected Letters, op. cit.*

[3] Welles, Gideon, Narrative of Events, MS.

[4] *Ibid.*

seems quite well established.[1] Under such circumstances the President-elect had to feel his way with extreme caution.

He sensed from the beginning the complexity of the situation and was too good a politician to ignore its significance, but he was deeply perplexed. He needed the support of all factions yet it was difficult to please all. To his friends Gustave Koerner and Norman B. Judd on January 6, he confessed he was in a quandary and manifested his distress.[2] The next day in a confidential letter to Senator Trumbull, who was opposed to Cameron, he set forth the problem as it then stood, saying that Cameron had not been offered the Treasury post and probably would not be given it. He believed it a necessity that Chase be placed there partly because of his ability and purity of character and partly because he alone could reconcile William Cullen Bryant and his " class " to the appointment of Seward to the State Department. At the same time there was the protectionist opposition to Chase and to clear this Cameron must be brought to cooperate. Cameron would readily do this if given the War Department, but then there was violent opposition to his having any place, and threats of carrying the issue to the Senate to procure his rejection. As a solution, Lincoln proposed that Cameron retain his seat in the Senate, " and if that place has been promised to another let that other take a respectable and reasonably lucrative place abroad." If this could be done and if Cameron's friends in Pennsylvania and elsewhere were " with entire fairness cared for ", he thought Cameron would be satisfied.[3] But that program apparently did not work and the problem dragged on. Late

[1] Welles, Gideon, Narrative of Events, MS.; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, p. 408; Gurowski, Adam G. de, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 16; Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 201.

[2] *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, vol. ii, p. 114.

[3] Lincoln to Trumbull, Jan. 7, 1861, *Uncollected Letters*, pp. 173-174.

in the month, Lincoln's old law partner, Herndon, in his quaint way summed up the situation by saying: "Lincoln is in a fix. Cameron's appointment to an office in his Cabinet bothers him. If Lincoln do appoint Cameron he gets a fight on his hands, and if he do not he gets a quarrel deep-abiding, and lasting." [1]

Early in February David Davis was reported to be "quite huffy" because Cameron and Caleb Smith of Indiana were not promptly admitted into the Cabinet.[2] It probably was a source of considerable embarrassment to him since he had traded Cabinet seats to the agents of these men in return for the support of their State delegations at Chicago. On February 6, Lincoln confidentially informed his friend William Butler, that he had determined that when he reached Washington he would submit the question of Cameron's appointment to the Republican Senators, deal frankly with them and act in whatever way was deemed best for the party. Of this he intended to inform Cameron. He declared that his intimation to Cameron that he would offer him a position in the Cabinet had given him more trouble than anything he had thus far encountered.[3]

Lincoln appears to have given comparatively little consideration to other possible candidates for the War Department. He may have had other persons in mind in the event that Cameron was deemed an unwise choice, but it is, with one exception, impossible to say who these men were. At one time Lincoln proposed James Guthrie of Kentucky, Pierce's Secretary of the Treasury, and sent Joshua Speed "to feel of him," but Guthrie declined on account of his

[1] Herndon to Trumbull, Jan. 27, 1861, Trumbull MSS. Lincoln appears to have dropped the matter of Cabinet appointments near the end of January for the time being. Seward to Lincoln, Jan. 27, 1861, quoted in Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 366.

[2] E. Peck to Trumbull, Feb. 3, 1861, Trumbull MSS.

[3] Butler to Trumbull, Feb. 7, 1861, *ibid.*

advanced age and consequent physical inability.[1] Efforts were also made early in 1861 to enlist one or more Southerners in the Cabinet, but these were unsuccessful.[2] At any rate it is unlikely that a man from that section would have been placed in the War Department at such a critical time.

When Lincoln arrived in Washington on February 23, all the Cabinet places except the Post Office and War Departments had been virtually filled.[3] Of the struggle that went on there over Cameron, few of the details are known. Nicolay and Hay dismiss the subject by stating that after a week of patient listening, Lincoln found his well-informed judgment unshaken as to the composition of his official family, and had by this time settled upon Cameron for the War Office.[4] Whether he held a conference with the Republican Senators is nowhere revealed, but it is quite certain that the problem was well thrashed over. A factor which may have redounded decisively in Cameron's favor was the powerful intervention of Seward and Thurlow Weed.[5] The presence of Chase in the Cabinet seemed to make Cameron's admittance imperative. They had not been able to keep Chase out and it was questionable how well Seward's peace plans could be executed with him in.[6] Seward fully expected to be the master mind of the administration and it was neces-

[1] Herndon and Weik, *Life of Lincoln*, vol. iii, p. 477.

[2] Bancroft, Frederic, *Life of William Henry Seward*, vol. ii, pp. 39-40; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-365.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 366-367.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 368.

[5] McClure, *Lincoln*, p. 159.

[6] Welles says of the appointment of Chase to the Treasury and Cameron to the War Department: "It was intended that this arrangement should be a triumph for neither. If Chase obtained the Treasury, Mr. Seward had a friend in whom he did not confide but who was a skilful party tactician associated in the council of the President to co-operate with and sustain him." Narrative of Events, MS.

sary for him to have at least a Cabinet majority if he were to succeed.[1]

Aside from the possible political advantages of a Seward-Cameron alliance for the future, mentioned by Welles, Cameron's Senate record showed him to be a man suitable for the new Secretary of State's purposes. He was of amiable temperament, had shown no disposition for a militant policy, and had been quite generally noncommittal on the vital issues confronting the nation. Ever a politician, he could switch policies to meet the exigencies of an occasion, and at this time he was probably as close to Seward's views as to those of any other public man. He spoke little and wrote little and would therefore be under no great embarrassment if his future actions were inconsistent with his past—if he ever suffered embarrassment in this regard. Such a man would be of greater usefulness to Seward than one of downright, dogmatic and outspoken convictions, particularly if those convictions were out in harmony with the ones which Seward held.

Whatever the subterranean influences may have been for or against him, whatever may have been the truth or the fallaciousness of the opprobrium heaped upon him, three things are indisputable: President Lincoln on March 5, 1861 nominated Simon Cameron to be Secretary of War, the Senate promptly confirmed the nomination, and on March 11, he took the oath of office.[2]

At this time Cameron was sixty-two years of age. He had reached the maturity of his powers as a business man and as a politician, and in both pursuits had been highly successful. In all respects he was a self-made man. Cameron was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, of

[1] Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[2] Mosher, Robert B., *Executive Register of the United States*, 1789-1902, p. 166.

German and Scotch ancestry. Reverses and misfortunes in his father's family cast him upon the world very early in life to carve and shape his own future. He apprenticed himself for a time in a printing business, and was soon able to attain an editorial position on one of the leading Democratic papers in the state, a place which developed in him a strong interest in politics. To study national political movements, he moved to Washington in 1822, obtained work in the printhouse of Gales and Seaton which published the Congressional debates and spent his spare time in the houses of Congress and in making useful friends. Among these were President Monroe and John C. Calhoun.

Upon returning to Harrisburg, Cameron bought a newspaper and advocated high-tariff doctrines and the union of Pennsylvania with the southern Democrats on the candidacy of Calhoun in 1824. At the same time his editorial position on his paper enabled him to take an active part in state politics, and brought him the remunerative position of state printer and the place of adjutant-general of Pennsylvania in 1826. For him the press was a source of power. It has been said by a hostile critic that he had no other conception of a newspaper than that it was a means to mislead the public, or to assail such as would not be misled. When his influence became established and his financial means sufficient, he left the press and entered other pursuits which afforded greater gain. In the thirties his activities were remarkable. It was the era of internal improvements and Cameron was quick to see the money-making possibilities. He became a contractor for the construction of sections of the Pennsylvania canal, and took a contract to build a canal between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, near New Orleans. Writing from that city to Governor Schulze of Pennsylvania in November, 1831, he said that if his canal project failed, there were numerous other opportunities. It

would be a great place for a brewery since there was none within fifteen hundred miles. A tallow chandler would make a fortune in a short while.[1]

But New Orleans did not hold Cameron long. Selling out his canal contract, he was soon active in Pennsylvania again. In 1832 he set up the Middletown Bank with himself as cashier. In 1834 he began a network of railroads which he later united into the Northern Central Railroad, and which in more recent times has become a part of the great Pennsylvania Railroad system. About the same time he was in the iron business, and subsequently was engaged in insurance. By 1854 Cameron was president of two railroad companies and an insurance company, and cashier of the Middletown Bank, besides being director and manager in several other institutions. Notwithstanding the diversity and responsibility of his many enterprises, he was credited with performing his duties with skill and success.[2]

At no time, however, did Cameron lose his interest in state or national politics.[3] He was influential in the Democratic party at a time when it had a powerful hold in the state, and his protective tariff views enlisted for him much sympathy and support from the rising industrial interests. When the problem of Jackson's re-election was puzzling the Presidential henchmen in 1830, because of Jackson's endorsement of the single-term idea, Cameron was zealous in

[1] Cameron to J. A. Schulze, Nov. 28, 1831, Cameron MSS.

[2] There is no extensive biographical sketch of Cameron. This account is based upon the following: *New York Herald*, Mar. 4, 1861; *New York Times*, June 3, 1878, June 27, 1889; *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, June 21, 1889; *New York Tribune*, June 27, 1889; *Harrisburg Daily Patriot*, June 22, 1889; Cameron to L. S. Coryell, June 2 and 14, 1838, Coryell MSS.; Cameron MSS.; Harris, Alexander, *A Biographical History of Lancaster County*.

[3] Cameron's letters from 1824 on show that he was wide awake as to political affairs. Coryell MSS.; Cameron MSS., *passim*.

inducing the Pennsylvania legislature to send to the President a memorial urging him to accept a second nomination so that the administration policies might be carried on. Other states followed the example of Pennsylvania in sending memorials; the impression got abroad that Jackson was yielding only to the popular demand and he was able to proceed without embarrassment.[1] Again, preliminary to the campaign, when Jackson wished to dispose of Calhoun, then Vice-President, in favor of a man sympathetic with the administration, Cameron was once more a powerful agency. The result of the deliberations of the Jackson men was a change to a party convention, as a means of selecting candidates. Cameron gave liberally of his own funds for its expenses, and the delegates after nominating Jackson, selected Martin Van Buren to replace Calhoun.[2]

Jackson owed much to Cameron and gave him much. One thing which he did for him appears to have redounded to the advantage of James Buchanan and was a means of keeping Buchanan in political affairs at a time when he despaired of a future. Upon his return from his post as minister to Russia, Buchanan informed Cameron of his decision to practice law in Baltimore, since he saw no prospects for himself in politics. Cameron opposed this, and together they went to Washington. While there, Senator Wilkins of Pennsylvania, poor in pocket because of the cost of living

[1] *New York Times*, June 27, 1889; *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie*, pp. 104-105; *Niles' Register*, vol. xxxviii, pp. 169-170; vol. xl, pp. 126-127; Stanwood, Edward, *History of the Presidency*, vol. i, pp. 153-154.

[2] Cameron to Buchanan, Dec. 29, 1836, Dec. 5, 1837, Buchanan MSS.; *New York Times*, June 27, 1889; *Niles' Register*, vol. xlii, p. 235; Stanwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160. Cameron was probably instrumental in swinging the Pennsylvania delegates in the convention to the side of Van Buren. They had been instructed to vote for William Wilkins of Pennsylvania, but switched to the New Yorker in the convention. In the electoral college, however, the Pennsylvania electors kept to their pledge and voted for Wilkins.

at the capital, requested Cameron to exert his influence to gain for him the vacant embassy in Russia, which was more remunerative. It was Cameron's opportunity to conciliate the Wilkins faction, of late unfriendly to him,[1] and at the same time to aid Buchanan. He appealed to Jackson; Wilkins was sent to Russia, and the Pennsylvania legislature was prevailed upon to elect Buchanan to the Senate vacancy. Both men were made happy and the influence of Cameron was enhanced.[2]

Prior to this time Cameron had held no public position except that of adjutant-general, a place which gave him little more than prestige and the title of "General" which clung to him throughout the rest of his life. In the summer of 1838, however, Cameron struck out for his own political advancement, announced himself a candidate for Congress and started an electioneering campaign. But he soon relinquished it in favor of an appointment by Van Buren to serve as commissioner in settling certain claims of the Winnebago Indians, a place which he acquired with Buchanan's assistance.[3] In seeking this appointment, Cameron told Buchanan he desired it principally because he wished some tangible evidence that his early and efficient services in favor of Van Buren were remembered, and secondly because he wanted "to judge fairly of all the advantages of a portion of the Union which I have long thought possessed of attractions for one of my habits and temperament."[4] These may have been part of Cameron's motives, but if one is to

[1] Because of Cameron's opposition to his Vice-Presidential aspirations.

[2] Cameron to Buchanan, Dec. 29, 1836, Buchanan MSS.; Keyes, Erasmus Darwin, *Fifty Years Observations of Men and Events*, p. 348; *Harrisburg Daily Patriot*, June 22, 1889; *New York Times*, June 27, 1889; *New York Tribune*, June 27, 1889.

[3] Cameron to Buchanan, Dec. 28, 1837; June 26, July 5, 1838, Buchanan MSS.; Cameron to Coryell, July 23, Aug. 1, 1838, Coryell MSS.

[4] Cameron to Buchanan, Dec. 5, 1837, Buchanan MSS.

judge by results, it is probably nearer to the truth to say he saw opportunities in the work for monetary gain. Considerable scandal arose out of his activities because of his adjusting the Indian claims by giving notes of the Middletown Bank instead of gold, a circumstance which contributed to his own profit and earned for him the derisive sobriquet, "The Great Winnebago Chief." [1]

Following this episode, Cameron passed into political eclipse for a time; his reputation as a "big boss" lessened. Even Buchanan's regard for his influence waned,[2] but in reality all that Cameron had thus far done was only the prologue to his entrance upon the political stage. His career as a masterful politician was only beginning. The foundations for his business fortune by 1845 had been soundly laid; twenty years of apprenticeship in state and national politics had been served; he was now able to devote his attention more largely to public affairs and reap the harvest of political reward. His own business interests bound him more strongly than ever to a protectionist program at a time when it was the demand of his state, and the general desires of the industrial elements were in perfect harmony with his own. These views might not coincide with the views of the Democratic party of which he was a member, but to Cameron that did not matter. It was easier to shift political affiliation than to juggle business interests. Of this Cameron's career is a vivid testimonial. Though his principles were often unstable, and his course was usually laid to catch the popular breeze, his grasp of the practical was never unfirm.

In 1845 President Polk called Buchanan from the Senate to the post of Secretary of State. It was Cameron's oppor-

[1] *Sen. Exec. Doc.*, No. 229, 25th Cong., 3rd Sess.; *New York Tribune*, June 27, 1889; Steet, Ida M., "The Simon Cameron Indian Commission," *Annals of Iowa*, vol. vii (3rd ser.), pp. 116-139, 172-195.

[2] *New York Times*, June 27, 1889.

tunity. When Buchanan asked him who should succeed to the vacancy in the Senate, Cameron replied that he expected to do so, a response which surprised and annoyed his old friend.[1] Buchanan appeared to have his own condidate. Judge George Woodward, a man imbued with free-trade doctrines, became the candidate of the party caucus.[2] But Cameron was not to be put down. The Democrats had an insecure hold on the legislature controlling it by a majority of one, but on the tariff their strength was divided. Knowing this Cameron called up the support of the protectionist Democrats, solicited the votes of the Whig and Native American groups, went before the legislature and carried off the honors.[3] Alexander McClure, writing in 1905, said that from that time until Cameron's death, nearly a half century later,

there is not an important complete chapter of political history in the State that can be written with the omission of his defeats or triumphs, and even after his death until the present time no important chapter of political history can be fully written without recognizing his successors and assigns in politics as leading or controlling factors.[4]

Still the victory of 1845 did not crown Cameron as the political czar of his state. He had won his election by fusion methods and incurred bitter Democratic opposition. Only by reconciling this group or by duplicating the coalition of 1845 could he succeed in being returned to the Senate in 1849

[1] Savidge, Eugene C., *Life of Benjamin H. Brewster*, p 71; *Harrisburg Daily Patriot*, June 22, 1889; *New York Times*, June 27, 1889.

[2] McClure, *Lincoln*, p. 147; *New York Times*, June 3, 1878; *New York Tribune*, June 27, 1889; *Niles' Register*, vol. lxviii, p. 38.

[3] Buchanan to Mr. Herr, *et al.*, Mar. 31, 1845, Buchanan, *Works*, vol. vi, p. 136; McClure, *op. cit.*, p. 147; *New York Times*, June 27, 1889; *Niles' Register*, vol. lxviii, p. 38; Mueller, Henry R., *The Whig Party in Pennsylvania*, pp. 115-117.

[4] McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, p. 98.

for a full term. Neither of these things was he able to do, and as a result he went down to defeat.[1]

Cameron and Buchanan, friends and allies of a few years before, were now at the parting of the ways. He who often credited himself with the "making" of Buchanan in Jackson's time, now considered his former product an "old political hack" so fallen that he could not carry a county.[2] And Buchanan had come to consider Cameron an intriguing rogue and an unprincipled rascal.[3] That they should have drifted apart sooner or later was inevitable. They could not remain political bed-fellows. Cameron like the Duke of Newcastle of an older day knew "the price of every member and the intrigues of every borough," and from these things Buchanan turned disdainfully away.

In 1854 Cameron again plunged into the maelstrom of Pennsylvania politics with an eye to the Senatorship. He aligned himself with the Democrats in the state elections, but immediately afterwards courted the American or Know-Nothing element and became an aggressive candidate for the Senate against Andrew Curtin. Here began a conflict which carried through and affected adversely the relations between Curtin as governor and Cameron as Secretary of War in 1861. The contest became exceptionally bitter, resulted in the choice of neither man, and undoubtedly impelled the political opportunist, Cameron, to seek his fortunes in the newly formed Republican party.[4] In 1856, for the first time he took an open stand against the Democrats, became a Republican candidate for elector-at-large, and actively supported Frémont's campaign. He enjoyed no great favor with Pennsylvania Republicans but soon occupied a strategic

[1] McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, p. 98; McClure, *Lincoln*, p. 149.

[2] Cameron to L. Frazer, Mar. 19, 1851, Cameron MSS.

[3] Buchanan to J. Davis, Mar. 16, 1850; Buchanan to W. R. King, Mar. 29, 1850, Buchanan, *op. cit.*, vol. viii, pp. 373, 375-376.

[4] McClure, *Lincoln*, pp. 149-150; Mueller, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-217.

position. If given solid Republican support, it was said he could command three Democratic votes in the legislature and win the Senatorial seat for the party in 1857? Personal assurance was gotten from the three Democrats, Cameron was voted the party choice and the combination voted him into the Senatorship.[1] Rumors went abroad that there had been a dirty bargain; the three Democrats were ostracized by their party;[2] Republicanism in Pennsylvania had gained a fresh footing and an adroit, even if unscrupulous, leader, and President Buchanan found thrust into his pathway an implacable foe from his own old political stamping ground.

Cameron's party somersaulting was now at an end; he remained a Republican for the rest of his life, and gave generously of his time, his energy and experience to the building up of a smooth-running party machine. In the management and control of it he was unequaled. Thaddeus Stevens, David Wilmot, William Kelley, Andrew Curtin and others might dispute his leadership, force a set-back, administer a defeat, but none ever succeeded in permanently supplanting him in his position.[3]

Defeat attended him in the Senatorial contest of 1863, but in the election of 1867, after a struggle of unexampled desperation, he was successful. From then on it was easy. In 1873 he was returned to the Senate without a contest. Four years later he resigned after it had been ascertained that his son could be elected as his successor. The arrangements carried through, James Donald Cameron was chosen and like his father served for many years in the United States Senate.[4]

No politician of his generation understood the science of

[1] McClure, *Lincoln*, pp. 150-151.

[2] *Ibid.*; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, pp. 269-270.

[3] *Harrisburg Daily Patriot*, June 27, 1889.

[4] McClure, *Lincoln*, p. 151.

politics better than Simon Cameron; none enjoyed greater power; none had more success. He studied and understood individuals who could be of service to him, and he knew the precise value of men and could marshal them when occasion arose. His methods were often circuitous, the means employed were often questionable, but the end in view was always clear. Cameron was a man of broad intellectual outlook if not of fine training; he could employ his faculties to the utmost and meet each new problem in an eminently practical way. He could be patient and conservative, or keen and aggressive, as the situation demanded. Tradition and precedent bore lightly upon him and were promptly brushed aside when new conditions and necessities arose. Cameron lived in a time when men firmly believed that "to the victor belong the spoils," and to this doctrine he gladly adhered. By patronage he was able to build up a political despotism in Pennsylvania; with it he rewarded his friends and punished his foes.[1] Doubtless many of those who pleaded his cause in January 1861, were men who already were or hoped to become his political pensioners. Of Cameron it was commonly said that he never forgot a friend or an enemy.

In his Senatorial career there was little that was statesmanlike or brilliant. He had no aptitude for Websterian oratory nor flights of verbal fancy. He said little in public that was vital, but doubtless did much in Capitol ante-rooms and privately that was practical, far-seeing and astute.[2] His business in the Senate, as elsewhere, was politics, and his conduct was governed accordingly.

[1] McClure, *Lincoln*, p. 151; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, pp. 274-275, 436; *Diary of Gideon Welles* (Morse, John T., ed.), vol. iii, pp. 20-21; *Harrisburg Daily Patriot*, June 27, 1889; *New York Tribune*, June 27, 1889.

[2] Ingersoll, *History of the War Department*, p. 527. A gentleman who knew Cameron informed the present writer that he once heard Cameron say that he would rather walk a long distance to tell a man something than write a letter, for if necessity arose later he could deny ever having

In appearance Cameron was tall, slim and commanding in form. He had a "marked Scotch face," keen gray eyes, a high, broad forehead and a luxuriant crop of gray hair. His manners and speech were kindly and gentle, and his genial democratic way won many people to him.[1] But his fighting qualities were great. He prided himself on possessing the doggedness and determination of his German forebears and the aggressiveness of the "Scotch rebels." Time dealt lightly with him and at the end of his half-century of political activity and struggle, he was hale and hearty as ever. For twelve years after leaving the Senate in 1877, he enjoyed freedom from the cares and perplexities of political life on his farm at Donegal Springs, and saw his son three times elected to the place he had surrendered to him. In his ninety-first year, rich in honors and in fortune, he passed away.[2]

From his private and public experience there was considerable to commend Cameron for the War Department. He had demonstrated his business acumen, organizing ability and administrative capacity. He was energetic, persevering and had proven himself a shrewd manipulator of men. None understood better the value of patronage wisely distributed and none was a greater master at the game. Lincoln needed the public support as no President before him ever did; patronage was one means of procuring and holding it and Cameron was a handy accomplice for such work. His eminently common-sense, practical ways doubtless were often relied upon in political matters during his brief incumbency of the War Department and as the war progressed. It was to Cameron that Lincoln turned when the political situation was critical in 1864, and a fair share of the credit for

[1] Keyes, *Fifty Years Observation*, pp. 348-349; Bates, David H., *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office*, p. 26; Arnold, Isaac, *Lincoln and Slavery*, p. 180; *New York Times*, June 3, 1878.

[2] McClure, *Lincoln*, pp. 151-152.

Lincoln's victory belongs to the man from Donegal Springs.[1] Lincoln had reason to feel that Cameron was worth a trial in the War Office and he gave him a chance. A few days were needed to clear up personal affairs in Pennsylvania, his seat in the Senate was relinquished and on March 11, Cameron qualified for his place as Secretary of War.[2]

By the time Lincoln entered the Presidency, seven southern states had seceded. One after another the federal forts had been seized, until nearly all in the South except Sumter and Pickens were in Confederate hands. Other properties suffered the same fate. The Confederacy had been organized, officers chosen and other slave states urged to join in the building of a new nation. While all this had been going on, the Union army and the War Department had remained almost as quiet as though nothing was happening. The army was still scattered, far-flung from the seat of danger, and the War Department underwent little change in personnel except when men withdrew to the South. Secretary Holt had undoubtedly infused much of his own vigorous spirit into the methods and activities of the department, but preparations for war were hampered and controlled by the policies of others.

One of the first problems to confront Secretary Cameron was the old and irritating one, the reinforcement of Forts Sumter and Pickens. Holt on March 4 had received Major Anderson's letter of February 28, which stated 20,000 "good and well-disciplined men" would be needed, if Sumter were to be reinforced. On the 5th the letter with the opinions of Anderson's subordinates was placed in Lincoln's hands, who in turn handed them over to General Scott.[3] In the

[1] McClure, *Lincoln*, p. 166; *Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie*, pp. 104-105; *Harrisburg Daily Patriot*, June 22, 1889.

[2] Cameron's oath, War Department Files, MSS.

[3] Lincoln's Message to Congress, July 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 312.

evening of the same day, Scott returned the data and informed the President that he and chief of engineers, General Totten, had reluctantly concluded that "evacuation seems almost inevitable." But Lincoln was not convinced. The papers were again sent to General Scott with verbal orders, later committed to writing, "to exercise all possible vigilance for the maintenance of all places within the military department of the United States, and to promptly call upon all the departments of the Government for the means necessary to that end."[1] March 9 the first Cabinet meeting was held and the Sumter problem was for the first time presented to the members. All except Cameron were present, and military and naval men as well. The military men thought reinforcement was hopeless; the naval men were optimistic.[2] General Scott's mature considerations had confirmed his views of March 5, and he went so far as to submit a draft of an order for evacuation.[3] From the military point of view there was nothing for the administration to do but get the garrison safely out of the fort.[4]

In spite of this persistent contention of the army leaders, the President remained unsatisfied. On the contrary, he and a Cabinet majority accepted the feasibility of a relief plan proposed by Gustavus A. Fox, an ex-naval officer of wide experience.[5] Next the important question of the political aspect of reinforcement was raised. On March 15 Lincoln requested a written opinion from each member of the Cabinet on the question: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, under all the circumstances is

[1] Lincoln's Message to Congress, July 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 312; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 379.

[2] Bates, *Diary*, quoted in Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 380-381.

[3] Bancroft, *Life of Seward*, vol. ii, p. 94, footnote.

[4] Lincoln's Message to Congress, July 4, 1861, *op. cit.*

[5] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-385.

it wise to attempt it?" All of the Cabinet except Chase and Blair frankly opposed the step. Chase's affirmative was conditional. Blair, a Jackson Democrat, was unequivocally in favor of relief. Seward was against it because he was confident it would lead to conflict, and at that time he believed a peace policy could and would triumph. Secretary Cameron, basing his negative opinion upon the views of the military men, declared that "the President would not be justified to disregard such high authority without overruling consideration of public policy." The views of the officers at Fort Sumter, General Scott and General Totten were for him sufficient proof of the impracticability of sending an expedition. He rejected the Fox plan because it would afford only temporary relief, and the question would be up again in a month or two. It was his belief that at any time up until early in February succor might have been dispatched, that it ought to have been sent, but that now the difficulty had been increased "ten if not twenty fold." Nearly the whole of his answer was devoted to an exposition of the military inexpediency; only in a short concluding paragraph did he reply to the specific question asked. In this he said: No practical benefit will result to the country or the Government by accepting the proposal alluded to, and I am therefore of the opinion that the cause of humanity and the highest obligation to the public interest would be best promoted by adopting the counsels of those brave and experienced men whose suggestions I have laid before you." [1]

The President was not ready to act in defiance of the majority of his Cabinet and the military experts, nor was he willing as yet to accept what to them was inevitable. To abandon Sumter at that time, he believed would be ruinous;

[1] Four of the opinions submitted may be found in Crawford, *Fort Sumter*, pp. 348-361; resumés of others are in Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-388; Cameron's opinion is given in full in *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 196-198.

the necessity under which it would be done would not be fully understood, and by many it would be construed as a part of a "voluntary policy". It would be our national destruction consummated.

Of the evacuation group, Seward was the moving spirit. It was in line with his program. It must be done. The views of old General Scott, doubtless sincerely believed in and accepted, were probably impressed upon him by the Secretary of State. For many years he had been under the political influence of Seward and Weed, and during the winter of 1860-1861, Scott and Seward had been in intimate relations. As evidence of his ability to control the administration policy, Seward had pointed out to Southerners his influence over General Scott, until recently a leading coercionist. And was not Scott's written opinion of March 5 to the President in complete harmony with the Secretary's own views? Again, although the President on that same day had verbally requested the general to exercise "all possible vigilance for the maintenance of all places," several days later it was found that nothing had been done, and it was necessary on the 11th to put the order in writing. Scott had no intention of being recreant in his duties: his error was that he looked upon Seward, who wished to maintain the *status quo*, as the guiding force of the government. And Seward was thoroughly convinced of this himself.

It was easy for Cameron also to fall in line with the same program, for he, like Seward, was for conciliation. Next to his own selection, he had been favorable to the choice of Seward in the Chicago convention, but the opposition to the New Yorker had been too strong in the Pennsylvania delegation for the Cameron men to swing the support to him.[1] Moreover, he probably felt deeply indebted to Seward for helping him to win the War portfolio. At any rate, he stood

[1] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. ii, pp. 422-423.

with the Secretary of State on the reinforcement issue. He could not have done otherwise since he accepted the verdict of Scott, whose views in turn were those of his acknowledged leader. Seward was doing well, with the heads of the War Department and the army beside, or behind, him.[1] He was beginning to exercise that influence over the department and army which strengthened and delighted him so much as the days went by.

For two weeks after the Cabinet meeting of March 15, the question of reinforcement was held in abeyance, but they were not weeks of idleness. Attention was given to the problem of collecting tariff duties at Charleston, and agents were dispatched to Sumter and Charleston to study the situation.[2] Up until this time, the Sumter problem had overshadowed in the President's mind the consideration of Fort Pickens. On March 12 an order had been sent commanding that the troops on board a war vessel lying off the post be landed,[3] and Lincoln had therefore considered that position safe for the time being. His surprise was, as a consequence, almost overwhelming when General Scott, upon being called to the White House on March 28, urged that Fort Pickens as well as Sumter should be evacuated.[4]

The impression has long been held that Scott did not reach this strange conclusion until about the time he informed the President. The truth of the matter seems to be that he was of this opinion two weeks before. On or about March 15 he submitted to Cameron "General Scott's Memorandum for the Secretary of War," in which he stated:

[1] Welles, Gideon, *Lincoln and Seward*, pp. 57-58.

[2] Lincoln to Chase, to Welles and to Bates, Mar. 18, 1861, Lincoln, *Works*, vol. vi, pp. 224-225; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-392.

[3] E. D. Townsend to Vogdes, Mar. 12, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 360.

[4] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

It is doubtful, however, according to recent information from the South, whether the voluntary evacuation of Fort Sumter alone would have a decisive effect upon the States now wavering between adherence to the Union and secession. It is known, indeed, that it would be charged to necessity, and the holding of Fort Pickens would be adduced in support of that view. Our Southern friends, however, are clear that the evacuation of both forts would instantly soothe and give confidence to the eight remaining slave-holding States, and render their cordial adherence to this Union perpetual.[1]

It is evident that Cameron used the memorandum in formulating his written opinion of March 16, which favored the evacuation of Sumter, but he apparently gave Lincoln no intimation at the time that the general also wanted Fort Pickens abandoned.[2] Nor did he do so prior to March 28.

[1] *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 200-201.

[2] Scott's memorandum bears no date. Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 394, insert it in the text in such a manner as to give the impression that it was presented to Cameron about the time Scott informed Lincoln. A footnote in the *Official Records, loc. cit.*, p. 196, says it was probably submitted with other papers to the Cabinet on March 15. This is obviously incorrect, for had it been done there would have been no surprise later in the month. A comparison of Scott's memorandum with Cameron's opinion of March 16, however, makes clear that Cameron possessed the memorandum when writing, for he used verbatim some of Scott's words and phrases. Scott was probably prompted to favor the evacuation of Fort Pickens at that time partly because of letters received from Colonel Keyes, his military secretary, who was then in New York. Keyes wrote to his chief setting forth the difficulties of landing ordnance stores at the fort. He also expressed alarm at the amount of supplies needed at the post. Upon his return to Washington Keyes favored giving up Pickens as an "act of grace." Keyes, *Fifty Years Observation*, pp. 377-378. General Totten, chief of engineers was probably of the same opinion in the middle of March. By April 3 he was strenuously opposed to sending reinforcements to either fort, believing that any attempt would be futile. It is interesting to note that he devoted only one paragraph in opposition to relieving Sumter and ten against the advisability of reinforcing Pickens. Totten to Cameron, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 232-235.

Why he should have concealed from the President such an important point is nowhere disclosed. It was probably because Cameron, like General Scott, had become deeply involved in Seward's conciliation program. The thoughts and activities of the Secretary of State in these days are veiled in mystery. He was working fast and furiously, but quietly. The forts were like counters in the contest, and peace was his prize.

But the happenings of March 28 and 29 interrupted whatever project Seward had in hand. Scott had gone to the Executive Mansion on the 28th seemingly in the belief that the President would be willing to give up both forts. However, he was grossly mistaken. The President appears to have been greatly annoyed as well as surprised. He felt that Major Anderson had "played us false," and indicated that the general was inconsistent in his views concerning Fort Pickens. He declared that his administration would be disrupted unless a more decided policy was taken, and hinted that if Scott could not carry out his views, some one else might be assigned to the task.[1]

In the evening of that day, at the conclusion of the first state dinner, Lincoln, manifestly agitated, privately informed the Cabinet of Scott's suggestion.[2] It is hardly conceivable that this was news to Seward;[3] it could not have been

[1] Keyes, *op. cit.*, p. 378. Taken from his journal entry of March 29, 1861.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

[3] In later years Welles and Blair expressed the belief that Scott was acting as a decoy for the Secretary of State. The situation seems to have been that Scott was proposing the extreme step while Seward was negotiating for the less radical one of evacuating Sumter and maintaining the *status quo* at Fort Pickens for the time being. However, all the considerations, except the military ones, which Seward had urged for the giving up of Sumter applied with almost equal force to Pickens. Had the Confederates adopted the same military tactics in the case of Pickens, it too would have soon become as untenable as Sumter. Had Scott's suggestions carried, Seward's program would have been greatly helped. Welles, *Lincoln and Seward*, pp. 58, 60, 65; Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 104

to Cameron. The others were astounded. Almost immediately Montgomery Blair launched into a bitter arraignment of the general's whole course, charging him with "playing politician." The situation was tense. Indirectly, his words were a denunciation of the Secretary of State, for whose peace policy Blair had nothing but contempt. Before an adjournment was taken, there was a unanimous expression of opposition to Scott's proposal, but definite action was delayed until the meeting of the next day.[1]

On the 29th the Cabinet met at noon. Lincoln and Seward must have done some deep thinking in the hours which elapsed since they parted the night before; perhaps Cameron did too. His position might become embarrassing. Lincoln had not closed his eyes in sleep. The time had come for him to meet the nation's crisis.[2] Both he and Seward had reached the turn in the road. It must have been clear to the Secretary that his whole policy was in jeopardy. The odds were against him; his confidential friend and military adviser, General Scott, had been discredited, at least for the moment; the pledges which he had indirectly made to the South seemed about to be violated.[3] He must change his tactics or lose out completely. As for Cameron, he appears to have been absent from the Cabinet meeting. Was he too "playing politician"? Probably so. The discussion in the Cabinet meeting began, and covered a wide range. Much had been learned in the last few days as to conditions in South Carolina. Once more the President called for written opinions, then and there. They came from all but the absent Secretary of War, the man above all others who should have been present. The views of some had under-

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 394-395; Welles, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-68, 60, 65.

[2] Meigs, *Diary, American Historical Review*, vol. xxvi, p. 300. Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

[3] Bancroft, *op. cit.*, chap. xxviii, *passim*.

gone a transformation since March 15. Only Seward and Smith now were avowedly for abandoning Sumter. Chase used an "if", but seemed committed to reinforcement in the cases of both Sumter and Pickens. None openly favored evacuating the latter post; Seward would prepare for war at that point and in Texas, but would take active steps "only as a consequence of maintaining the possessions and authority of the United States." [1] The final decision as to whether aid should be sent now rested with the President, but the Secretary of State was not without hope, and perhaps a scheme.

On the 28th, however, Lincoln had resolved upon a forward step. He instructed Gustavus Fox to submit a memorandum as to what ships, men and supplies would be required for the Sumter expedition which Fox had proposed, and on the same day it was done. Preliminary orders for the Secretaries of War and the Navy were then drawn by the President and on the following day, after the Cabinet meeting, Cameron and Welles were directed to prepare an expedition in accordance with the preliminary memoranda, to be ready to sail as early as April 6.[2] Whether this was to be used or not depended upon circumstances.[3]

At once Seward took steps to adjust his position to meet

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 429-432 give the written opinions of all the Cabinet members except Cameron on the reinforcement question. These were written at the meeting.

One cannot but be impressed with the sparsity of evidence as to Cameron's activities as Secretary of War between the date of his accession to office and the opening of hostilities. The *Official Records* show extremely few letters, etc., bearing his signature, and evidence elsewhere is more scarce. He appears to have played no part of any importance in the prevailing crisis, except in the preparation of the Sumter expedition early in April.

[2] Lincoln to Cameron, Mar. 29, 1861, and enclosures, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 226-227.

[3] Lincoln's Message to Congress, July 4, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 313.

the changed situation resulting from recent occurrences. Movements were begun to fit out a Pickens expedition to be ready for hostilities "as a consequence of maintaining the possessions and authority of the United States." [1] It was a time for bold strokes, for carrying things with a high hand, and Seward had both audacity and courage. That he was not Secretary of War did not disturb him.

On the afternoon of the 29th, in complete disregard of Cameron, he brought to the President Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, who had in January accompanied reinforcements to Key West and Tortugas, and recommended that he be put in charge of Forts Pickens, Taylor and Jefferson. Seward had lost confidence in the older military men, Scott and Totten, or at least recognized that they were out of favor.[2] Meigs was confident Pickens could be held; Lincoln hesitated, and decided to consider the matter for a day or two. On the 31st, at the direction of Seward, Meigs and Colonel Keyes, Scott's military secretary, prepared a project for succoring Fort Pickens and on the same day, the President, through Seward, gave positive orders that the expedition be sent forward. The next day, April 1, at Meig's suggestion Lieutenant David D. Porter of the navy was commissioned by Lincoln to proceed to New York, commandeer for the Pickens project any naval vessel available, sail as soon as possible for Pensacola Harbor, and prevent any vessel with troops from crossing the bar to attack the fort. At the same time, Meigs sent an order signed by the President instructing the the commandant of the Brooklyn Navy Yard to get the *Powhatan* ready for sea at once, and another telling him

[1] Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 128, believes that Seward did not intend the expedition to be sent forward; that he resorted to it only as a means of maintaining his supremacy in the Cabinet.

[2] Welles, *Lincoln and Seward*, pp. 59-60; Meigs, *Diary, American Historical Review*, vol. xxvi, pp. 299-300.

under no circumstances to communicate to the Navy Department that this was being done.[1]

One of the most amazing features of the preparation of the Pickens expedition was the extraordinary secrecy which surrounded its projection. Seward was the guiding and moving spirit of the whole affair; Meigs, Keyes and Porter were youthful, enthusiastic accomplices; the President was an interested spectator, now hesitating and anxious, now acquiescing and freely endorsing; the old army chief was in the beginning called in as the great military adviser, but as the work progressed was seldom consulted.[2] As for the Secretaries of War and the Navy, they were kept as ignorant of the whole proceedings as though they were agents of the Confederacy, and on the sole excuse that there were disloyal clerks in their departments.[3] That a group of young officers should be completely trusted and two of the highest officials in the government, both vitally concerned, and in whose departments the preparations lay, should be kept in darkness beggars any reasonable justification. Astounding as it was, it fairly represents the character of Seward's whole transactions in the passing events.[4] He appears to have looked upon Cameron as a sort of chief clerk to whom were delegated departmental functions of an ordinary nature, while he.

[1] Meigs, *Diary, op. cit.*, pp. 299-301; Keyes, *op. cit.*, pp. 381-383. Lincoln to Commandant of Navy Yard, Apr. 1, 1861, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, ser. i, vol. iv, p. 109.

[2] Meigs, *Diary, op. cit.*; Keyes, *op. cit.*, p. 381 *et seq.*; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 437-439.

[3] Meigs, "The Relations of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton to the Military Commanders in the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, vol. xxvi, p. 287. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 130, footnote; Welles, *Lincoln and Seward*, pp. 54-56.

[4] On April 1 Seward presented his extraordinary paper "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." It leaves one in complete bewilderment as to just what Seward's real plans and purposes were. It was one of his bold strokes.

Seward, stood apart and above, staving off the national destruction, and calling forth all necessary means to solve the critical situation,[1]—a political Moses who would yet lead the nation out of a sea of trouble. Doubtless Seward felt justified in his attitude toward the Secretary of War from his knowledge of Cameron's political career. Had not Cameron always shown more interest in politics than in statecraft, and was he not busying himself with the patronage opportunities of his new post? Yes, he was. But Seward was soon to learn—for a moment—that the master politician was, nevertheless, unwilling to be a puppet in the direction of his own department.

In the first few days of April Cameron and Welles were extremely busy preparing for the relief of Fort Sumter. The Confederate Commissioners in Washington wrote to Toombs, their Secretary of State, that there was great activity in the War and Navy Departments. They suspected a relief movement was on foot.[2] April 4 Cameron informed Major Anderson that an expedition would go forward and urged him to hold out as long as possible.[3] The same day, he ordered Fox to take command of the relief work, to provision Sumter peacefully, if possible, but if resisted to meet opposition with force and put both men and supplies into the fort.[4] The Navy was assisting in the project by transporting, but the expedition as a whole was directed by the War Department.[5]

At the same time similar arrangements were being rushed for the Pickens expedition. It did not take long for the

[1] Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, pp. 37, 39.

[2] Crawford, Roman and Forsyth to Toombs, Apr. 3, 5 and 6, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 286-287.

[3] Cameron to Anderson, Apr. 4, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 235.

[4] Cameron to Fox, Apr. 4, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

[5] Welles to Mercer, Apr. 5, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 240.

secretive and irregular proceedings of Seward and his aides to result in clashing and confusion with the Sumter program and in considerable bitterness of feeling. Both projects called for the use of the *Powhatan*.[1] The President had without examining them signed orders brought to him by Seward, trusting implicitly in his Secretary of State.[2] One of these, signed April 1, directed that the *Powhatan* be placed at the disposal of the men arranging for the Pickens expedition, while Welles at the same time was counting on it for the succoring of Sumter.[3] Two others made new assignments of duties to naval officers without the sanction of their department head.[4]

April 4 Lincoln resolved to send forward the Sumter expedition. The next day, with his approval, Secretary Welles directed Captain Mercer to command the fleet and to use the *Powhatan* as his flagship.[5] There were, as a consequence, two orders at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, one signed by the President, the other by the Secretary of the Navy. A controversy resulted; the Pickens men referred the matter to Seward, who in turn accosted Welles. Together they went to Lincoln, each hopeful of winning the vessel. Seward lost. He was promptly directed to telegraph orders for the transference of the ship to the Sumter group, and reluctantly did so, in his agitation using his own signature instead of the President's.[6] But it was now too late. Porter had secured

[1] Welles to Mercer, Apr. 5, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 240; Meigs, *Diary*, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

[2] Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 18.

[3] Meigs, *Diary*, *op. cit.*, p. 301; Lincoln to Commandant of Navy Yard, Apr. 1, 1861, *Naval Records, loc. cit.*

[4] Welles, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23; Welles to Mercer, Apr. 5, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

[6] Welles, *op. cit.*, p. 24; Crawford, *Fort Sumter*, p. 414; Porter to A. H. Foote, Apr. 5, 1861 (?), *Naval Records, loc. cit.*, p. 111; Seward to Porter, Apr. 6, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 112.

the *Powhatan* and was under way. When overtaken and shown the order signed by the Secretary of State, he declined to obey, contending that the Presidential order took precedence over any signed by a Cabinet member.[1]

Although Fate gave the victory to Seward, he had cause to feel embarrassed. Both Cameron and Welles were furious at his extraordinary meddling in the affairs of their departments. Cameron complained that Seward was trying to run the War Office, had caused Captain Meigs to desert and in his wrath Cameron threatened to have Meigs arrested and court-martialed for his absence without leave and his expending department funds without authority from the Secretary of War.[2] Seward was for the moment penitent, told

[1] Crawford, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-415; Porter to Seward, Apr. 6, 1861, *Naval Records, loc. cit.*, p. 112.

[2] Welles, *op. cit.*, p. 25. That Meigs looked upon Seward as the all-important figure in military affairs appears evident from his correspondence and actions. To Seward on April 6 he wrote that old men "who were soldiers and sailors forty years ago" were clogging the army and navy and keeping active men out of high places. He strongly endorsed Colonel Keyes for high command, and Keyes in turn endorsed Meigs. Again, he was urging Seward to purchase vessels, fill them with troops and stores and send them forth on "mysterious errands" as in the case of the Pickens expedition. His praise for the loyalty of the officers in that exploit was both lavish and full of purpose: "It promises for the country, if properly appreciated and encouraged, a most efficient army, animated by hope and patriotism. From such men, and not from the pillows used to bolster up political reputations, should the colonels of your new regiments be selected. . . . On the spirit and loyalty of your officers depends the success of your armies." When Meigs completed his report of the Fort Pickens affair on May 20, 1861, it was not forwarded to Cameron but promptly dispatched to the State Department. Meigs to Seward, Apr. 6 and 10, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. i, pp. 368-370; Meigs, Diary, 1861, MS. (This source is a different diary from the one printed in the *American Historical Review*; it is in the Library of Congress.)

Cameron's displeasure over Seward's interference is further evinced in a letter from Seward to Keyes. In this he stated that Cameron disliked his (Seward's) officiousness, and for that reason Keyes should thereafter address his communications to the War instead of the State Department. Keyes, *Fifty Years Observations*, pp. 398-399.

Welles he had learned a lesson and would thereafter confine his labors to his own department.[1]

The relief of Fort Pickens was entirely successful. The expedition arrived just in time to cooperate with other movements. Men and supplies were landed without great difficulty, and the fort, now made safe, remained a federal possession throughout the war. But misfortune dogged the steps of the Sumter vessels. A storm blew some of the smaller ones off their course; the *Powhatan,* specially equipped for the relief work, was on its way to Pickens, and before new arrangements could be made offshore, the attack which had begun on April 12 resulted in Anderson's capitulation on the 13th and evacuation of the fort the following day.[2] A vexatious problem was at last ended, but it had brought in its stead another of terrible consequence and stupendous magnitude. War had come.

[1] Welles, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[2] Crawford, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-415; Meigs to Totten, Apr. 25, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 393-399; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, chapters ii and iii, give a full account of both relief expeditions.

CHAPTER III

The Fruits of Indifference

Weeks of uncertainty and inaction over the reinforcement of Sumter, and the portentous consequences so intimately bound up with the question, had made the President's position an extremely trying and thoroughly miserable one. He afterwards admitted that all the troubles and anxieties of his life had not equaled those which intervened between his receipt of Anderson's letter on March 5 and the fall of Sumter in April.[1] But now the curtain of doubt had been lifted, the issue was perfectly plain, and his course of duty unmistakably clear. He felt constitutionally bound to exert the full power of the government to maintain the Union. Already Cameron's mettle was to be tried and the department over which he presided put to the supreme test. The resources of the nation must be called forth and concentrated at once. Upon the effectiveness of their utilization success would depend.

On the morning of April 14 the Cabinet and a group of military men met to consider the immediate course to be pursued.[2] That force applied for the government's destruction should be countered with force for its preservation was an accepted premise.[3] But how large a body

[1] Browning, Orville H., Diary, July 3, 1861, MS.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 76-77; Welles, Narrative, MS.

[3] Lincoln to Virginia Commissioners, Apr. 13, 1861, quoted in Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Lincoln to Congress, July 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 314.

should be requisitioned? On this the members of the first war council differed widely. Cameron subsequently credited himself with having proposed a call for 500,000 men, a close blockade of the southern ports, the capture of Charleston and New Orleans, and the freeing of all slaves who should desert their masters and join the Union armies. To these measures, he said, Seward objected on the ground that they would close the door to any reconciliation with the seceded states.[1] Welles, however, recorded that the numbers considered varied from 50,000 to 100,000 men.[2] The result of the deliberations was an appeal for 75,000 of the militia in the several states still in the Union. A proclamation to this effect, drawn up the same day, was issued on Monday, April 15. In it there was also a call for Congress to convene in special session July 4 to "consider and determine such measures as in their wisdom the public safety and interest may seem to demand." Detailed arrangements for the raising and organizing of these militiamen were left to the War Department.[3]

On the same day that the Presidential proclamation went forth, Cameron appealed to the governor of each state in the Union for infantry and riflemen, giving the quota of officers and men, the place of rendezvous and the term of service. Men were to serve for three months, unless sooner discharged. The aggregate called for was ninety-four regiments of 3,549 officers and 69,842 men. In addition there were to be five major-generals and seventeen brigadiers.[4] Quotas were to be at

[1] Gilmore, James R., *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War*, pp. 23-24; Ingersoll, *History of the War Department*, pp. 525-526; *New York Times*, Apr. 21, 1878, quoting from the *Harrisburg Telegraph*.

[2] Welles, Narrative, MS.

[3] Lincoln's Proclamation, Apr. 15, 1861, *O. R. loc. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

[4] Cameron to the Governors, Apr. 15, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

the points of rendezvous by May 20.[1] On the 15th Cameron also called for eight companies of militia from the District of Columbia in addition to ten already summoned on April 9, five on the 13th, and one on the 15th.[2]

From the northern states the responses were immediate and so vigorous as to banish any doubt as to whether the administration would have full support. The Confederate attack upon Sumter had welded the northern people into a unit in defense of the Union. Messages poured into the War Department on the 15th, 16th and 17th from the governors assuring Cameron that quotas would be filled promptly, and additional companies sent if necessary.[3] In one dispatch of April 15th, Governor Andrew of Massachusetts asked: "By what route shall we send?"[4] In another of the same day he urged the doubling of production at the Springfield Armory, offered money or credit, if needed, expressed eagerness to raise more troops and to garrison the forts in Boston Harbor.[5] These messages were typical of the desires throughout the North to render service in the national distress. Indeed, so eager and anxious were some of the state executives, and so great was state pride and rivalry that the department soon suffered embarrassment from over-reaching ambitions.

Since early in April, some of the state authorities had been in communication with Cameron and the department, seeking ways and means to strengthen themselves for the impending conflict. Morton of Indiana on April 4 requested an advance quota of arms and re-

[1] Cameron to the Governors, Apr. 16, 1861; *ibid.*, p. 75.

[2] Cameron to R. C. Weightman, Apr. 9, 13, 15, 16, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. li, part i, pp. 321, 324, 325; ser. iii, vol. i, p. 75.

[3] Governors to Cameron Apr. 15, 16, 17, *ibid.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 70-84.

[4] Andrew to L. Thomas, Apr. 15, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 71.

[5] Andrew to Cameron, Apr. 15, 1861, *ibid.*

ceived it.[1] Governor Buckingham on the 13th informed the Secretary that he intended to recommend to the Connecticut legislature a reorganization of the militia system so as to render it of more practical value.[2] Massachusetts on the same day asked for an advance quota of 2000 rifled muskets, and assured Cameron if granted "we will have 5,000 as well armed, drilled and officered infantry as ever handled a musket."[3] On the 14th Minnesota offered 1,000 men to be available on short notice.[4]

Only in the border and southern states still in the Union were the responses to Cameron's request for militia quotas unsympathetic. From the governors of Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri and Arkansas, the replies were sharp and severe in their refusal to contribute a single man for "any such unholy crusade" against the seceded states.[5] Governor Hicks of Maryland, a Unionist at heart, believed her quota could be furnished if the troops would be used only within the borders of the state or in defense of the District of Columbia.[6] Governor Burton of Delaware on April 25 disclaimed any power enabling him to comply with the requisition of the Secretary of War. There was no militia organization in the state and no law authorizing the executive to raise one. Some com-

[1] Morton to Ordnance Bureau, Apr. 4, 1861, and endorsements of Craig and Cameron, Apr. 5 and 10, *ibid.*, p. 64.

[2] Buckingham to Cameron, Apr. 13, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 66.

[3] W. Schouler to Cameron, Apr. 13, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

[4] Ramsey to Cameron, Apr. 14, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 67.

[5] Magoffin to Cameron, Apr. 15, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 70; Ellis to Cameron, Apr. 15, 1861, p. 72; Letcher to Cameron, Apr. 16, 1861, p. 76; Harris to Cameron, Apr. 17, 1861, p. 81; Jackson to Cameron, Apr. 17, 1861, p. 82-83; Rector to Cameron, Apr. 22, 1861, p. 99.

[6] Hicks to Lincoln, Apr. 17, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

panies were organizing, but the governor was without power to order them into the federal service.[1] In the District of Columbia, militia conditions were very discouraging. The capital city had long been southern in spirit and sympathy and it was not unnatural that this should have been reflected in the armed citizenry. Enlistments under Cameron's several appeals were obtained only after embarrassment, difficulty and conciliation. The first companies called out could not be mustered because a large number of men declined to be sworn into service. It was finally necessary to stipulate as a condition of muster that they were to serve only within the District.[2]

But it was one thing to call troops and quite another to meet the host of problems ensuing from the summons and a state of war. Long years of neglect of the army and the civil establishment now bore fruit all too abundantly. Almost nothing was in readiness at the very moment when everything needed to be. Congress had adjourned without making provision for the dangers which everybody saw and everybody feared. Lincoln had been endowed with no more military authority by it than his predecessor, but fortunately for him he did not share Buchanan's constitutional views. The regular army was about the same size when war began as it was when Congress convened in the previous December.[3] Nothing had been done to increase it. As for the militia, except in a few states where energetic executives had been active, it was little more than a collection of citizenry with a few guns, a few supplies, an odd assortment of gaudy uniforms, and an enthusiastic patriotism.[4]

[1] Burton to Cameron, Apr. 25, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 114.

[2] *Report of the Provost Marshal General*, part i, p. 7.

[3] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, p. 65.

[4] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 41-42; Report of F-J. Porter

Equally deplorable were the shortcomings in the War Department. Five weeks under Cameron's management had effected little change that helped to meet the crisis; in some respects conditions had actually grown worse. Preparations which ought to have been made were suspended in the hope that a peaceful solution would be found. Seward had been especially solicitous that nothing should be done which smacked of belligerency; his optimism continued to the last. Lincoln too had been reluctant to upset the *status quo*, and hesitated in sanctioning vigorous activities. Welles says that time and again in the days shortly before the outbreak of hostilities he urged precautionary measures for his own department, but his proposals were always thought "precipitate", likely to excite apprehension or certain to manifest a want of confidence in the people of some state or section. The War Department, he adds, suffered in the same way. Restraining and retarding every forward step was the almost daily injunction or request to do nothing which might be misconstrued.[1] Count Gurowski, a friend of Seward and familiar with the official machinery, summed up the situation in his diary by saying: "The month of March closes, but the administration seems to enjoy the most beatific security. I do not see one single sign of foresight—the administration seems not to go to work and reconstruct, to fill up what treason has disorganized and emptied. Nothing about reorganizing the army, the navy, refitting the arsenals."[2]

The withdrawal of men of southern proclivities tended

to Thomas, May 1, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. li, part i, p. 346; Foulke, *Life of Morton*, vol. i, pp. 116-117, footnote; Shannon, Frank, Organization and Administration of the Army, 1861-1865. (Manuscript thesis, University of Iowa.)

[1] Welles, Narrative, MS.

[2] Gurowski, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 21.

to weaken still further the already inadequate army and department. Although only twenty-six enlisted men are known to have left, 313 officers, many of them among the best in the army, resigned from the service, usually with the full pay due them and almost invariably with complete impunity. More than half of these rose to the rank of command in the Confederate forces.[1] The loss of so many competent officers, nearly one-third of all in the army, was a severe blow to the Union cause at a time when their presence was sorely needed to direct the training of raw recruits and to lead troops in the field. The withdrawal of such men as Robert E. Lee and Albert Sidney Johnston was especially unfortunate in the latter regard, for the army had exceedingly few men capa ble and experienced at the outset of the war in handling more than a few companies. The forces had been badly scattered, promotions above the rank of lieutenant and captain had been slow, and of the small number of officers of higher station few were able to do field service because of age and disabilities.[2] General Scott after more than fifty years of service was too infirm to do more than advise and direct. General Wool was too old for an important field command; Patterson soon proved himself to be in the same class, and Twiggs had already aligned himself with the Confederacy.

Statistics show that of the ninety employes on the regular staff of the office of the Secretary and the bureaus in 1860, only fifty-six were still serving in September, 1861. Of the thirty-four missing, three had died. Most of those from Virginia and the other southern states had withdrawn. Some from the District of Columbia did likewise, but it cannot be determined

[1] Upton, *Military Policy*, pp. 239-241.

[2] Cox, Jacob D., *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War*, pp. 174-175.

whether they did so because of their views or were removed for political reasons or left for ordinary causes.[1] In the department at large, however, the numbers leaving were probably considerably greater, particularly in the southern depots where the employes joined the Confederacy *en masse*.[2] Two of the most serious departmental losses were the resignations of Adjutant-General Samuel Cooper, March 7, 1861, and Quartermaster-General Joseph E. Johnston, April 22, 1861.[3] Both accepted service in the Confederacy and acquitted themselves with distinction.

To make matters still worse, Cameron's political instincts for plunder overrode his administrative judgment and further changes in the department resulted. Old clerks received "broad intimations" that they would be expected to retire in favor of others who had not enjoyed the flesh-pots.[4] A new party had come into power and debts must be paid. Beggars for office from everywhere and for every place had flocked to Washington—"some in rags, some in tags and some in velvet gowns." Through March and into April the changes went on; Pennsylvania was receiving recognition in the War Department. If there had been only five from that state on its payroll under Floyd, there were soon twenty-seven under Cameron, and more in the depots outside the city.[5] Doubtless many of these fell heir to the places of departed southern sympathizers, but so apprehensive did the bureau heads become of a widespread upheaval

[1] *Sen. Exec. Doc.*, No. 12, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess.; *Register of Officers and Agents*, 1861, pp. 101-104.

[2] Upton, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

[3] *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 964; Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 208.

[4] *New York Tribune*, Mar. 23, 1861.

[5] *Register of Officers and Agents*, 1859, pp. 102-104; ibid., 1861, pp. 101-104; Military Book, No. 43, *passim*, MSS.

that before the end of March they joined with General Scott in a remonstrance against the demoralization of their offices.[1] And now an old convention debt was paid handsomely. John P. Sanderson, that faithful henchman who had bartered Pennsylvania's vote for a Cabinet post for Cameron, received the chief clerkship, a position second only to that of the Secretary of War, since there was no office of Assistant Secretary at that time.[2]

Here were men of no experience in the department and its bureaus taking on manifold duties at a most critical time. At the opposite extreme stood the heads of the bureaus most of whom suffered from too long a period of service. Some had been in the federal employ for half a century or more. There were no retired lists for the disabled or those weighted down with years, and so they hung on till the end. Colonel Gibson who nominally filled the office of commissary-general, had held the post since 1818 and was now a confirmed invalid, wholly unable to discharge his duties. Colonel Taylor, his assistant, was also old, rather feeble and quite incompetent for the gigantic war problems. His death in 1864 terminated about fifty years of army service. The surgeon-general, Lawson, had been in the army almost continuously since 1809 and had held his

[1] *New York Herald*, Mar. 27, 1861.

[2] *Ibid.*, Mar. 22, 1861. Early in April a movement was set on foot, sponsored mainly by Montgomery Blair and Secretary Chase, to have William T. Sherman accept the post of chief clerk in the War Department. Blair wired: "We will make you assistant Secretary of War when Congress meets." Senator Sherman a few days later wrote: "Chase is especially desirous that you accept, saying that you would be virtually Secretary of War. . . ." W. T. Sherman peremptorily declined. M. Blair to Sherman, Apr. 6, 1861; Sherman to Blair, Apr. 8, 1861, John Sherman, MSS.; Thorndyke, Rachael S., *The Sherman Letters*, p. 110.

present place for twenty-five years. A subordinate performed his duties for the first month of the war, and upon his death on May 15, the seniority system put in his place Colonel Finley, another old-timer who soon failed to measure up to the requirements of war. Colonel Totten, chief of engineers, had entered the Military Academy in 1802 and had headed the Engineer Bureau since 1838. Colonel Craig, chief of ordnance, had begun his army career in 1812, served thirty years in a subordinate capacity in the bureau and had controlled its affairs since 1851. Other bureau chiefs had similar records.[1] In their offices everything was provided for by "regulations" which had become traditions, and they were considered just about perfect. Popular ideas were frowned upon with contempt as being crude and impracticable. Old ways were the best. It was military bureaucracy, pure and simple.[2]

By degrees, however, war forced a new atmosphere and a new spirit. Nothing else could. Red-tape, worn-out rules and regulations, and worn-out men had to give way under the pressure and burdens of war. Even then it took time, perseverance and insistence. Controversies arose, bitter feelings were occasionally engendered, the old ways often triumphed for a while, but in the end surrendered to the inevitable. War proved a mighty leveler and the firing upon Sumter forced a rather sudden and ruthless beginning. Where peace and quiet had long prevailed, a perfect pandemonium of activity broke loose. Seventy-five thousand men were called for—

[1] Heitman, *Historical Register*, vol. i, *loc. cit.*; *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 964. *New York World*, Aug. 20, 1861.

[2] Chittenden, Lucius E., *Recollections of President Lincoln and His Administration*, pp. 159-160; Pearson, Henry G., *Life of John A. Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 214-215; Schouler, James, *History of the United States*, vol. vi, pp. 313-314; *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. i, p. 169.

nearly five times the size of the regular army—and more than that number wanted to answer the summons. Arms had to be furnished, supplies purchased and distributed, and transportation provided. Men had to be mustered and trained. Only a Secretary of almost superhuman capacity could have satisfied the needs of the time, and Cameron very soon proved he was not such a man. Only a department, adequate in equipment, numerous in vigorous, trained personnel and highly efficient could fill the requirements, and the War Office and its bureaus fell short in all these respects.

Aside from the activity attendant upon the fitting out of the Sumter expedition, about the only forward steps taken in early April by the War Department and the military were the arrangements made between Cameron and the chief of ordnance for the providing of new depots for the more prompt distribution of arms to the militia in case of an emergency, the calling of some District militia to protect the capital, and the concentration of a few available companies from other places for the same purpose.[1] Such preparations were, of course, trivial as compared with what needed to be done immediately after the President's appeal on April 15. The government was duplicating its previous performances of beginning a war and preparing afterwards.

The initial burdens of war fell with especial severity upon such bureaus as the Quartermaster, Ordnance, Commissary, Medical and Adjutant-General's. Added to the fact that most of them were in charge of old men and crippled by withdrawals and removals, was the additional disadvantage that not one of them had a sufficient force for the work to be done, nor does there ap-

[1] Craig to Cameron, Apr. 5, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 64-65; Cameron to Weightman, Apr. 9, 13, 1861, *ibid.*, ser. i, vol. li, part i, pp. 321, 324; Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 65-67.

pear to have been any law under which they could be expanded by the appointment of extra permanent civil clerks. Consequently, it was necessary to employ men for temporary service, a measure which appears to have been resorted to throughout the war. Only occasionally did Congress provide for additions as time passed.[1] Provisions were made early, however, to increase the number of military staff officers for field work.[2] Another salutory step was the order issued April 22nd at Cameron's direction keeping all the offices open until five o'clock.[3]

During the first seven days of war when the states were clamoring for supplies, Joseph E. Johnston continued to hold his place as quartermaster-general. Upon his withdrawal, April 22, a subordinate, Major Ebenezer Sibley, was appointed to the post *ad interim*, and served in that capacity until the selection of Montgomery C. Meigs as quartermaster-general on June 13.[4] Under the most favorable circumstances Sibley's task would have been stupendous, but as the bureau and depots were then constituted it became an almost impossible one. Where a small staff had been accustomed to

[1] Ingersoll, *History of the War Department*, p. 189; Short, Lloyd M., *Development of National Administrative Organization*, pp. 236-238; Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 213.

[2] General Orders Nos. 15, 16, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 151-157; *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, pp. 268, 270, 274, 279, 281, 287.

[3] War Department Order, Apr. 22, 1861, MS., Old Files Division, Adjutant-General's Office.

[4] Special Order No. 113, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 99. The appointment of Meigs was made only after considerable difficulty. Cameron was strongly opposed to him, probably because of his relations with Seward in the Pickens expedition. Montgomery Blair and Seward were working in his behalf, and finally the President asked General Scott to use his influence with Cameron to gain his consent to the appointment. Meigs, Diary, entries of May 18, 27, June 8, 10, 13, 1861, MS.; Tarbell, Ida, *Abraham Lincoln*, vol. ii, p. 24.

equip in a leisurely way an army of about 16,000 men, it was now called upon to furnish equipment immediately for 75,000 extra. The depots at New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis were the principal centers of issue for the militia, but their stocks were soon exhausted and it was necessary to go into the open market. On the 23rd Cameron ordered Sibley to procure quantities of clothing, blankets and such other articles as might be needed to supply the wants of the troops.[1]

The situation as to arms was not much better. There were about 475,000 muskets and rifles recognized as usable for service, but only a small fraction of these were of the latest model. Of the remainder, more than 60,000 were in the far West and hence not available for immediate use.[2] Many others were so poor that they were discarded early in the war. Even so, there were more than enough weapons to supply the entire force, yet governors and other state officials were constantly complaining that they were in need of arms, indicating that the system of distribution was faulty and that the force available for the work was insufficient. Not one of the large depots was adequately officered in the early months, and in June the bureau head informed Cameron that an increase was an absolute necessity.[3]

In the main Ordnance Office in Washington the personnel situation was equally unsatisfactory. April 4 Cameron had detached Captain Henry E. Maynadier, a younger officer of much experience, to take charge of a "Protective Corps" which was to guard emigrants moving west, and ordered him to proceed with it to San Francisco, and then to return by the water route to New

[1] Cameron's order, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 107.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 43. Computed from the table.

[3] J. W. Ripley to Cameron, June 24, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 292.

York.[1] Why the Secretary should have detached at this time one of the most competent members of the force for this minor task is inexplainable. Three weeks later, April 23, he relieved Colonel Craig, chief of the bureau, on the ground of feeble health and placed Lieutenant-Colonel James W. Ripley in charge. Craig, who had been indisposed only one day the previous week, objected to Cameron's action as illegal; but his appeals to the Secretary and the President were of no avail. Lincoln declared he could not interfere with the arrangements which the War Department deemed essential for the efficiency of the service.[2] Ripley, however, was little, if any, improvement since he too was an elderly man; Cameron later admitted that he proved unsatisfactory.[3] The clerical force also fell short of the needs of the time, and the Secretary was informed that increases were necessary. The chief proposed to hire a few clerks temporarily on daily wages. He also indicated that the bureau was in need of more room for the proper conduct of its affairs.[4]

The same dull story might be recounted for the rest of the bureaus—old leaders, insufficient staffs, poor facil-

[1] Cameron to Maynadier, Apr. 4, 1861, Military Book, No. 43.

[2] Special Order No. 115, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 102; Craig to Lincoln, Apr. 25, 1861; Lincoln to Cameron, Apr. 29, 1861, War Department Files, MSS.; Orders and Endorsements, "BB", No. 10, War Office, p. 337, MSS. The Washington correspondent of the *New York Times*, July 13, 1861, attributed Craig's removal to the fact that he had "rendered himself obnoxious to the mercenary crew of jobbers and speculators who have dealings with the Government, and by his unflinching resistance to their schemes of plunder."

[3] Cameron's Harrisburg Speech, *New York Herald*, May 8, 1862. Ripley was at this time 67 years old. He was graduated from West Point in 1814, became a captain of ordnance in 1832, and at one time served as superintendent of the Springfield Armory. He was retired in 1863 and died in 1870.

[4] Ripley to Cameron, June 11, 1861, Ordnance Files, MSS.

ities. In all of them men were overworked, and the results were very often imperfect. Not until Congress convened and lessons were slowly and painfully learned was there any real correction of defects and deficiencies.

Scarcely had Cameron dispatched his requisitions to the governors for troops when the demands for arms, clothing and supplies of all kinds began. The decay of the militia system brought them with uncommon swiftness. Furthermore, many of the state executives were impulsive, impatient men of action. They had felt the pulse of the people, and it was beating with intense earnestness and zeal. Let the War Department hurry! They did not know the history of a half-century of indifference and neglect of the military and the deplorable conditions existing in the department. They knew only the desires and demands of the moment and both were great. Morton of Indiana after offering six additional regiments on April 17, and stating that 1,000 men would start for the capital on the 18th, wrote to Cameron on the 19th:

> Twenty-four hundred men in camp and less than half of them armed. Why has there been so much delay in sending arms? We have received none, and cannot learn that they have ever been shipped. No officer here yet to muster troops into service. Not a pound of powder or a single ball sent us, or any sort of equipment. Allow me to ask what is the cause of all this? [1]

On the same day General Patterson, active in Pennsylvania and spurred on by Governor Curtin, implored General Scott to go to the War Department and have a full supply of equipment sent there. If 10,000 arms could not be had, let 5,000 be sent. Declaring that necessity overrides all laws he insisted that arms, ammunition, clothing and equipment must be forwarded at once.[2]

[1] Morton to Cameron, Apr. 19, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 89.

[2] Patterson to Scott, Apr. 19, 1861, *ibid.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 579.

Failing to receive sufficient arms and equipment immediately, many of the governors took matters into their own hands and sent men scurrying to the available markets, armed with credentials and backed by state credit. To this the Secretary gave at least a tacit endorsement at first, and on April 26 informed Morton that Indiana had better follow the example of the others and equip her own men "to meet the existing necessities."[1] In the markets the state agents entered into competition with each other, with those dispatched by the federal government and with the middle-men as well. The battle of the agents was on; the heyday of prosperity for the selfish merchant and manufacturer was dawning.[2]

But under any arrangement or system the conditions of supply were highly unsatisfactory. The manufacture of cloth and materials for army clothing occupied only a few of the factories of the country; their output was limited and under the existing circumstances quickly exhausted. Other sources were tapped and soon ran dry. The real difficulties then began. Mills and factories of all kinds were set at work upon army goods, but could not manufacture rapidly enough to clothe the troops. The scarcity of suitable blankets, cloth and undergarments became serious.[3] As a final resort the European markets were called upon. Then there came the opposition of domestic industries, and their clamor of objection was loud and formidable. American clothes and blankets for American soldiers was the burden of their cry. The problem of buying arms was a similar one except that the state agents were hustled off to Europe at a much earlier day.[4]

[1] Cameron to Morton, Apr. 26, 1861, Military Book No. 43.

[2] *Vide*, pp. 149-151, 252-253, 259-260, 280.

[3] Report of the quartermaster-general, Nov. 18, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. ii, pp. 802-803.

[4] *Vide*, pp. 150, 206, 253, 255-257, 280 *et seq.*

While every wheel, cog and bolt of the administrative machinery was creaking and laboring under the enormous strain placed upon it, and while everyone connected with it was worn down with exertion, responsibilities and worries, communication between Washington and the North was suddenly cut off. A greater misfortune could scarcely have happened. The capital, almost completely isolated, appeared to be at the complete mercy of the Confederate forces. The Maryland authorities seemed to have lost their senses and their courage. Following a riot and attack upon the Massachusetts troops in Baltimore on the 19th, the governor and the mayor of the city wired President Garrett of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad that the troops moving to Washington should be sent back to the Maryland border. The Northern Central was asked to send no more troops through the state. Protests were also made to the President against soldiers passing through. The municipal bridges were carefully taken down by direction of city officials and those of the railroad companies soon destroyed by ruthless men. On the 21st a party of Baltimore police cut down telegraph poles and the wires leading to the North. Only the line between Washington and Baltimore remained, the government controlling one end, Baltimore the other. Mail communication was completely cut off.[1]

Cameron was quick to remonstrate, declaring on the 19th through the adjutant-general that Governor Hicks had neither the right nor the authority to divert the troops. He ordered that they be sent on prepared to fight their way through, if necessary.[2] On the 21st,

[1] Welles, Narrative, MS.; J. A. Wright to Porter, Apr. 19, 1861, Porter MSS.; Felton and Thomson to Cameron, Apr. 19, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 578; T. H. Hicks to Lincoln, Apr. 22, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 588-589; *National Intelligencer*, Apr. 22 and 23, 1861.

[2] Thomas to Felton, Apr. 19, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 578.

however, Lincoln alarmed by the railroad obstructions in Baltimore and the excitement there, directed by messenger that the troops at Cockeysville, Maryland, be sent back to Harrisburg and routed outside the state as far as possible.[1]

In the capital the situation was agonizing. A panic prevailed until communications were reopened. The wildest rumors gained credence in streets and hotels. Business was at a standstill. Families packed up their effects; women and children were hurried off to points of safety. Provisions advanced to famine prices. The preservation of the city became for the moment the all absorbing problem of General Scott and the department. From his office the debilitated old general directed affairs pertaining to the military. All available troops were placed at strategic points or assigned to guard the public buildings, many of which had been hastily barricaded. Arms were distributed to government clerks and volunteers who patroled the streets and performed guard duty. Flour at the mills and other stores of provisions were put in safe keeping. A system of signals was devised to insure rapid concentration at any point of attack. Cameron directed that the railroad depot and such cars and engines as could be found there should be commandeered for the use and protection of the government.[2] He also sent an engineer to reopen the Northern Central and an officer of the department with orders to take charge of troops assembling at Harrisburg and

[1] Order of General Scott, Apr. 21, 1861, Porter MSS. Cameron later on countermanded the order, verbally instructing the messenger, Major Belger, to have the troops march through at all hazards. Belger, however, delivered the original order and the troops withdrew. Cameron to Porter, Sept. 3, 1881, *ibid.*

[2] Stanton to Buchanan, May 16, 1861, Buchanan, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 191; Seward, Frederick W., *Seward at Washington*, vol. i, pp. 550-553; Nicolay, Abraham Lincoln, p. 194.

to concentrate them at Baltimore as soon as that city could be reached. He was determined to occupy it without delay and exert the whole power of the War Department, if need be, to prevent the obstruction of the free transit of troops.[1]

Early in the excitement a body of unarmed, raw recruits from Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Sixth reached Washington. These and the local volunteers and District militia filled to capacity the public buildings. Due to the shortage of camp equipage and accoutrements in the city a difficult problem of quartering others arriving then arose, and it was soon necessary for Scott to inform General Patterson that no more troops should be sent on without camping outfits.[2] By the night of the 22nd he believed there were forces sufficient to defend the Capitol, the arsenals and the executive buildings against 10,000 men no better than the District volunteers. In the course of the next few days, however, enough troops had arrived by circuitous routes so that he was able to give assurance on the 29th that there was no longer any apprehension for the safety of the city.[3]

The hectic days before isolation had made obvious to all concerned the inability of the administration in general, and of the War Department in particular, to prosecute properly the labors before them with the existing means; the severing of communications and the resulting confusion impressed upon them with even greater force the necessity for extraordinary action. Sunday,

[1] Cameron to Thomas, Apr. 27, 1861, Military Book No. 43, MSS.

[2] Egle, *History of Pennsylvania*, pp. 262-263; *New York Herald*, May 8, 1862; Scott to Patterson, Apr. 22, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 587; *ibid.*, Apr. 29, 1861, *Private and Official Correspondence of General Benjamin F. Butler*, vol. i, p. 56.

[3] Nicolay, *op. cit.*, p. 195; Scott to Butler, Apr. 29, 1861, *Butler Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 54.

April 21, Lincoln convened the Cabinet in the Navy Building and informed its members that the crisis had reached such a pass that they must choose between using only the means which Congress had provided and let the government fall into ruin, or in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, make use of such unauthorized means as were available to save it and trust to Congressional sanction later. The Cabinet unanimously favored the latter course; arrangements were agreed upon and a number of emergency orders issued which normally would have devolved upon the War and Naval bureaus for execution. In this case, however, authority was delegated to specially designated agents. A committee of three New York men, John A. Dix, George Opdyke and Richard Blatchford was given $2,000,000 to be disbursed in paying such debts incurred in defense and support of the government as were presented to them by duly constituted agents. Another group of leading citizens of New York consisting of George D. Morgan, William M. Evarts, Richard Blatchford and Moses Grinnell in conjunction with Governor Edwin D. Morgan, was empowered to exercise practically the full authority of the War and Navy Departments in organizing troops and forwarding supplies.[1] On the 23rd Cameron assigned the same sort of work to the Governor and Alexander Cummings, Cameron's old henchman, saying that either of them in case of inability to consult with the other was to exercise the authority given.[2] Of this latter privilege Cummings seems to

[1] Seward, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 551-552; Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 137-138; Dix, Blatchford and Opdyke to Chase, Apr. 28, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 136.

[2] Cameron to Morgan and Cummings, Apr. 23, 1861, Military Book No. 43. Cameron had already written to Cummings on April 21 asking him to aid in buying and forwarding supplies from New York. He

have freely availed himself.[1] He took little or no part in the dispatching of troops, went in for any orgy of reckless buying, failed to consult competent military agents in New York, paid high prices and procured many articles either inferior in quality or totally useless, such as $21,000 worth of straw hats and linen pantaloons, and also ale, porter, codfish, herring, pickles and tongue. One lot of arms which he purchased at $15.00 each consisted of muskets which had been rejected and sold by the government at $3.50 each the previous June.[2]

Even before the Cabinet meeting of April 21st, however, measures of an unusual nature had begun. On the 17th Cameron had requested J. Edgar Thomson to act as the War Department's special agent in arranging for the speedy transportation of troops and munitions over the Pennsylvania, and Baltimore and Ohio Railroads and others connecting with them.[3] The same day Cameron had sent Major Fitz-John Porter, assistant adjutant-general up to Harrisburg on a mission of varied activity. He was to aid in mustering into service the Pennsylvania quota and to use them in protecting the "Cameron road" between Harrisburg and Baltimore. In addition, he had received from the Secretary and General Scott verbal instructions to use their names for any good purpose.[4] With these authorizations in mind, while in Har-

added: "They will, I think, much of them have to come *via* Easton, Reading, Harrisburg, and the rest by sea, *via* Annapolis." The land route meant the use of the "Cameron road." *House Report* No. 2, part i, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 55.

[1] Governor Morgan was unable to serve and delegated his authority to George D. Morgan, a relative and business partner. The latter bought between $15,000 and $25,000 worth of goods and then stopped. Thereafter Cummings acted alone. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 59, 66-67, 391.

[3] Cameron to Thomson, Apr. 17, 1861, Military Book No. 43; Thomson to Cameron, Apr. 17, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. li, part i, p. 327.

[4] Porter's Memorandum (undated), Porter MSS.

risburg Porter issued orders to General Harney in St. Louis to distribute arms and equipment, and detailed Captain Nathaniel Lyon to muster troops at St. Louis and use them for protecting public property. Similar orders for mustering went to Assistant Adjutant-General Seth Williams at St. Louis and Major Hagner in New York. He gave numerous orders for the purchase of horses and for requisitions on the Pittsburgh arsenal for arms and equipments.[1] On the 18th Seward plunged into the maelstrom and wired Thurlow Weed to hasten the movement of steamers with troops *via* Annapolis. An hour after the receipt of this, Weed received another telegram from Cameron directing him to charter vessels and dispatch troops to Annapolis.[2]

While these activities were being authorized and carried out, another round of extraordinary measures began in the North, far wider in extent and much greater in intensity. With the severance of communications governors became war lords, careless of regulation, fearless in action, bent on results. To their assistance and cooperation promptly and voluntarily came old General Wool from his headquarters at Troy, New York, who although next to Scott in army rank, had no more authorization than the rest. In the principal cities leading citizens united for action. New Yorkers promptly formed the Union Defence Committee, a body of great usefulness; Chicago soon had a similar organization; Boston was agog with activity under the dynamic governor, Andrew; Philadelphians were no less so. With-

[1] Porter's Memorandum (undated), Porter MSS.; Report of Porter to Thomas, May 1, 1861, Porter MSS.; also *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 352-368, *passim*; Egle, *Life of Andrew G Curtin*, pp. 341-342. Many letters in the Porter MSS. show Porter giving orders for purchases and furnishing requisitions.

[2] Weed, Thurlow, "Early Incidents of the Rebellion", *Galaxy*, vol. ix, p. 833.

out rules to follow and regulations to obey they struck out with free hands, and the accomplishments were splendid. Writing from Philadelphia, James Wadsworth declared: "All the efficiency, energy and capacity here is found outside the military organizations. Thompson, President of the Pennsylvania Central, and Felton, have accomplished all that has been done. They and other private citizens here and elsewhere have saved the Capital." [1]

No single individual in the North took upon himself greater responsibility than General Wool, then seventy-seven years of age, and certainly none received less credit. Although his health was impaired by years and infirmity, he saw the crisis clearly and without hesitation joined heartily in the hurly-burly of irregularities and activities. He became the leading advisory and directing force in the entire North, a combination general-in-chief and Secretary of War. Beginning on April 20 when he visited Governor Morgan at Albany he proposed quick and energetic measures, gave orders to an assistant quartermaster-general to furnish transportation and to a commissary of subsistence to supply thirty days' rations to troops ordered by water to Washington. On Monday, April 22, he hastened to New York City, consulted with members of the Union Defence Committee, approved on behalf of the government their plans to aid in the capital's preservation and adopted measures to carry them out. Being informed that the troops in Washington were short of provisions he directed that until otherwise ordered, 30,000 rations be dispatched daily *via* Perrysville to Annapolis. Upon his arrival in New York Wool found requisitions for arms and ammunition from the governors of nine states. In the course

[1] Pearson, Henry G., *James S. Wadsworth of Geneseo*, p. 58.

of a few days he ordered the distribution of 76,300 muskets and rifles and over 1,830,000 cartridges to them. In addition he directed the governor of Illinois and Francis P. Blair, Jr., to take steps to save the St. Louis Arsenal, and authorized the sending of 51,000 arms from it to Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. Permission was given to Governor Andrew to drill troops in the Boston forts and direction was sent to place companies in the Watertown Arsenal and Springfield Armory. Ships were chartered, convoys sent out with troop ships and numerous other orders issued to meet the special needs of particular cities and sections.[1] It seemed for the moment as though the War Office and its bureaus had been transferred to New York.

Attempts by the general to get official sanction for the work he was doing were unsuccessful, and it was soon very plain that the authorities were neither pleased with Wool's unauthorized performances, nor with the impatience and criticism displayed in the North. On May 1 word came from Scott ordering him to return to Troy to recuperate his feeble health and to attend to his headquarters affairs. The general-in-chief added that the very great necessity which existed for carrying out the business of the several staff departments with system necessitated the request that Wool give no orders interfering with the purchase or issuance of army supplies.[2] May 6 Cameron wrote a suave letter of thanks to Wool

[1] Wool to Union Defence Committee, July 24, 1861, *Reports, Resolutions and Documents of the Union Defence Committee* (Supplemental Report, 1862), p. 6 *et seq.*; Wool to Scott, Apr. 23, 25, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 106-107, 114-115; G. Boutwell to Cameron, Apr. 26, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 119; Pearson, *Life of Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 201-203; *New York Herald*, July 12, 1861.

[2] Wool to Committee, July 24, 1861, *Reports, loc. cit.*, pp. 9-10; *The Union Defence Committee of the City of New York* (Stevens, John A., ed.), pp. 21-22; Townsend to Wool, Apr. 28, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 124.

for his services, but a month later in replying to a letter from Wool inquiring whether his work had really met with the War Department's approval and that of Scott, Cameron said that while the department did not wish to find fault, it must frankly be admitted that Wool was returned to Troy because he had issued arms and ammunition without consulting the department and because his work embarrassed its prompt and proper administration and a continuance of it would be in disregard of the law.[1]

The contention of the Secretary was both inconsistent and absurd. At the very time that Wool was operating, Major Porter, armed with a *carte blanche*, was carrying on similar activities in Harrisburg, of which the War Department knew nothing until May 1, and Alexander Cummings, an irresponsible and inexperienced civilian, was recklessly spending government money in New York. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how the old general was conflicting with departmental activity when all communications between Washington and the North were severed. While Wool had not official authorization for the work he was doing, his efforts did win the approbation of the northern people and he was constantly being cheered on by the Union Defence Committee, by the governors, by Vice-President Hamlin who worked hand in hand with him in New York, and by Senators Sherman, Chandler, Foot and Baker. Requisitions were made upon him for the very good reason that the state executives had no communication either to or from the War Department except by courier, a means which was slow and little used.[2]

[1] Cameron to Wool, May 6, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 161; Cameron to Wool, June 7, 1861, *Reports, loc. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

[2] Wool to Committee, July 24, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 13-14. John Sherman wrote to Wool on July 18, saying: "The facts stated by you certainly

There was a quite prevalent belief in New York that the true reason for Wool's return to Troy was not that he was interfering with affairs handled in Washington, but because he stood in the way of speculators, and it was these men who had prompted the order. Weed, it was said on good authority, was directly and indirectly associated with some of the schemes of plunder as were some others who were working with him.[1] That speculation and fraud were rampant in these days was amply proved by a Congressional investigation which took place later in the year.[2]

Isolated from the centers of northern activity and occupied with problems immediately before them in Washington, Cameron and the rest failed to catch the popular spirit. There was a common belief in the North that the government and the politicians in Washington were far behind the people, and as a consequence they felt impelled to act for themselves.[3] When the first mail to reach Boston from the capital after the severance of communications was received on April 25, and it brought no instructions from the War Department to the State House, Andrew was furious and at once hurried his attorney general to Washington. In a letter introducing him to Montgomery Blair, the governor asked: "*How long —Oh Lord—how long, will they delay our People?*"[4]

show that you did not exceed your legal authority to so great an extent as all the Departments of the Government did theirs. Congress will justify the President for exceeding his delegated authority on the ground of public necessity and on the same ground I justify your acts." Sherman MSS.

[1] John Jay to Chase, May 3, 1861, Chase MSS.

[2] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess.

[3] Dennison to Cameron, Apr. 22, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 102; J. Kirkwood to O. C. Treadway, Apr. 30, 1861, *Iowa Historical Records*, vol. vi, p. 565; Foulke, *Life of Morton*, vol. i, p. 118; Pearson, *Life of Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 206, 208-209.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-206.

By the end of the month the worst of the isolation crisis was over; the administration began to gather up once more the threads of control and to direct preparations and movements. The temporary and rather make-shift steps taken helped greatly in the emergency, but they needed to be replaced by agencies of a more regular and permanent nature. Some such measures had already been taken, some were soon provided, while others were instituted later on.

Mobilization and advance required better and more efficient handling of transportation by land and sea than could be done by the Quartermaster Bureau, and new arrangements were needed for the administration of the telegraph service. Of these problems Cameron had a full and sympathetic understanding because of his private interests. As a consequence he called Thomas A. Scott, vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, to assist in the rail and telegraph administration and John Tucker, a civilian from Pennsylvania, to manage the water and other phases of the transportation problem. Scott in the first rush of activity had been serving as special aide to Governor Curtin, in charge of railroads and telegraphs, but as early as April 21, Cameron had informed him that the department needed his services to keep open and work the Northern Central Railroad from Harrisburg to Baltimore, a function supplementing that of Thomson and Samuel M. Felton for other roads leading from the North. Upon his arrival in Washington on the 26th, however, Scott was requested to take control of the rail and telegraph connections between that city and Annapolis so that a route might be opened to Washington.[1] This he did.

[1] Cameron to Scott, Apr. 21, 1861, Military Book No. 43; Scott to Cameron, Apr. 23, 1861; Cameron to "To whom it may concern," Apr. 27, 1861, War Department Files, MSS.; Porter to Thomas, May 1, 1861, Porter MSS.

Serious difficulties with the railroads in Maryland had appeared almost from the beginning. The destruction of bridges and tracks of the Northern Central and the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad was accompanied by the temporary loss of the Baltimore and Ohio for military purposes. April 19 Thomson and Felton informed Cameron that this road had refused to transport troops over its lines to Washington. David Wilmot promptly advised that the section of the road between Baltimore and Washington and a line between Baltimore and Havre de Grace be taken over by the government and placed under military control. The idea appears to have struck the President with much force for he was at the time greatly disturbed over the severing of communications. Full powers were at once given to Cameron to open and operate them.[1] It was at this juncture that he put Scott in charge.

The initiative had already been taken, however, although apparently without authorization, by the blusterous politician-general, Benjamin F. Butler. On April 23, Butler had seized the Annapolis and Elk Ridge Railroad, a subsidiary of the Baltimore and Ohio, and began to put it into condition so that troops could effect an entry from Annapolis into Washington.[2] Four days later Scott relieved him of this task and carried the work to completion.[3] Like powers were assumed over the rail connections between Baltimore and Washington soon after the federal troops took possession

[1] Thomson and Felton to Cameron, Apr. 19, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 578; Wilmot to Scott, Apr. 20, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 582; Cameron to Thomson, Apr. 27, 1861, Military Book No. 43.

[2] O'Driscoll, B. J., "Sketch of the Origin and Organization of the United States Military Railroad Service," Military Railroads File, MSS., Fort Myer, Maryland.

[3] *Ibid.* The military route when opened on the 29th was by water from Perrysville to Annapolis, and from that point to Washington by rail. Cameron to Thomson, Apr. 27, 1861, Military Book No. 43; Cameron's Report, July 1, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 307.

of the rebellious city early in May, and direct rail communications with the North were quickly resumed.[1] With the repairing of the Northern Central and the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore roads the reconstruction was complete and from that time until the close of the war, rail connections to the capital were kept open.

Having successfully completed these urgent and important measures, the scope of Colonel Scott's work was widened. May 23 Cameron announced that he had been appointed to take control of all government railroads and telegraphs or those appropriated to its use, and all instructions relating to them thereafter were to emanate from Scott's office.[2] The splendid spirit already manifested by the principal roads of the North made it unnecessary, though, for the government to confiscate all the lines for its use. April 18 the Pennsylvania had through its president, Thomson, offered to carry troops and supplies to the temporary exclusion of all other traffic; on the 26th the Illinois Central expressed the same sentiments, and the Northern Central and Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore had performed valuable services before the destruction of their facilities and continued to do so when they were restored.[3] Under such conditions it was only necessary for Scott to act for the department in directing the utilization of the roads' properties to the best advantage.

The work to which John Tucker was assigned supplemented that performed by Colonel Scott. Either as a result of an informal understanding with Cameron or on his own

[1] O'Driscoll, *op. cit.*; R. N. Morley to Cameron, Nov. 25, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 673.

[2] Cameron to "To all whom it may concern", May 23, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 228.

[3] Wilson, William B., *Reminiscences of a Railroad Engineer*, p. 41; *National Intelligencer*, Apr. 19, 1861; W. H. Osborn to Cameron, Apr. 26, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 121-122.

initiative, Tucker began about May 1 to take an active part in the vexatious transportation difficulties.[1] On the 8th Cameron gave him an official appointment as general agent in charge of transportation. He was to concern himself with the movement of troops, supplies and munitions of war, and was authorized to purchase or charter vessels or such other means of conveyance as would provide the speediest means of transportation. All the bureaus were instructed to inform him of their requirements in this connection so that the work might be accomplished with economy and system.[2]

Prior to his appointment the chartering of vessels had been carried on by several persons, and the natural result was inefficiency, waste and confusion. J. Edgar Thomson and one Captain Loper operating in Philadelphia between April 20 and May 7 had chartered nine steamers by the day and fifteen by the month "or as long as needed." In New York Weed had been busy under authorizations from both Seward and Cameron, and General Wool and the Union Defence Committee had also taken a hand in chartering ships. In New England the same was true to some extent.[3]

The selection of Tucker as general agent did very little or nothing to improve the situation. He had no experience in transportation work and subsequently admitted that he had never before built, purchased, commanded or operated a vessel in his life. His first steps were commendable in that he dispensed with all but two of the ships chartered at the day

[1] Tucker to Cameron, May 1, 1861; Cameron to Tucker, May 3, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, pp. 616, 618.

[2] Cameron to Tucker, and Cameron to the Several Bureaus, May 8, 1861, Military Book No. 44, MSS.; also in Ordnance Files, MSS.

[3] Tucker to Cameron, May 14, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 196-197; *vide*, pp. 121, 123; Pearson, *Life of Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 180-181; *John Murray Forbes, Letters and Recollections* (Hughes, Sarah F., ed.), vol. i, pp. 206-207.

rate by Thomson and Loper and also planned to discharge as many as possible of those engaged on the longer terms.[1] Before long, though, a number of sub-agents and persons professing to act as such appeared in Philadelphia, New York, Boston and other places where ships were for sale or charter, and claimed that through them exclusively could transactions be made and results effected. In the chartering and purchasing done through their intercession with Tucker, commissions were exacted for their services. Furthermore, Tucker's lack of experience resulted in high prices being paid for vessels, and in some instances, those obtained proved utterly unseaworthy.[2] While there might have been some justification for his appointment for the first flush of war work, it is difficult to see why such an unqualified person was entrusted with this responsible task long after that time had passed.

Colonel Scott's railroad duties proved so pressing and absorbing that almost from the start he was obliged to entrust the telegraphic arrangements to other hands. Before the war the military telegraph had formed no permanent part of any *corps d'armee* of European nations except Germany, and this was equally true in the United States.[3] All of the facilities were in private hands and upon the companies possessing them the government was obliged to rely. During the perilous days of April the government did assume exclusive control of what telegraph lines there were leading from the capital and continued to maintain it, but this can hardly be said to have been more than nominal and supervisory. The fullest cooperation was accorded by the companies at all times and it was seldom necessary actually to

[1] Tucker to Cameron, May 13, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, pp. 635-636; *ibid.*, May 14, 1861, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 196-197.

[2] *House Report* No. 2, part ii, 37th Sess., 2nd Sess., p. iii *et seq.*

[3] Plum, William R., *The Military Telegraph during the Civil War in the United States*, vol. i, p. 62.

take possession of any office in the North. President E. S. Sanford of the American Telegraph Company assumed most of the work of directing and organizing for the War Department in the preliminary stages of war, and for many months the department relied almost completely upon the generosity of his company for expenditures in building, operating and maintaining telegraph lines. In his activities Sanford was ably assisted by four competent and reliable operators brought by Scott from the Pennsylvania Railroad's telegraph service, a group of men who formed the nucleus around which the United States Military Telegraph Corps gradually developed.[1]

For the first seven months of the war little attempt was made to do more than maintain a small organization to carry on the work in the vicinity of Washington. This unit was a special organization unconnected with any department bureau and with only a nominal head. It was subject to the Secretary of War alone.[2] When Colonel Scott's initial railroad tasks became somewhat lightened and a railroad organization was developed, however, he took over a more complete control of the telegraph operations and as Assistant Secretary of War acted as general manager of the military telegraph. All instructions relating to the conduct of government communi-

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 68, 93; Bates, *Lincoln in the Military Telegraph Office*, pp. 26, 35-36; Wilson, William B., *A Few Acts and Actors in the Tragedy of the Civil War*, pp. 97-98. Very early steps were taken in a few states to have a more effective handling of the telegraph. Anson Stager, general superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company, was placed in charge of the telegraph in southern Ohio about the middle of April by Governor Dennison. Almost immediately afterward the governors of Indiana and Illinois gave him a similar control in their states. May 27 General McClellan appointed him superintendent for the entire military department of Ohio. It was Stager who arranged the telegraph facilities for McClellan's western Virginia campaign. Plum, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-99, *passim*, p. 134.

[2] Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

cations came from him.[1] A censorship was established early which appears to have been administered first by the Treasury Department, then by the War Department, later by the State Department, and in February, 1862, resumed under orders from Stanton by the War Department.[2]

Cooperating with the War Department for humanitarian and frequently for administrative purposes were several agencies which sprang into existence in the first weeks of war or before the year closed. Miss Dorothea L. Dix, a life-long philanthropist, offered her services without remuneration to the government, and on April 23 by direction of the Secretary of War was given the responsible task of aiding in organizing military hospitals, supplying nurses and "substantial means" for the comfort and relief of the suffering. To her also was given authority to receive, control and disburse special supplies bestowed by individuals or associations, and under the sanction of the acting surgeon-general to draw from the army stores. Soon afterward her duties were enlarged so that she exercised a general supervision of the assignment of nurses to hospitals, general and regimental, occupied by troops at Washington and in its vicinity, a work which earned for her in the hearts of men a place such as had been enjoyed by Florence Nightingale for her services in the Crimea a few years before.[3]

Of a kindred nature was the work performed by the United States Sanitary Commission, a body of high-minded, public-spirited citizens. The inadequacies in the Medical Bureau and the menace to the health and efficiency of the

[1] Sanford to B. P. Snyder and G. H. Burns, Aug. 9, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 394-395.

[2] *House Report* No. 64, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. i.

[3] Cameron to Miss D. L. Dix, Apr. 23, 1861, Military Book No. 43; Order of Acting Surgeon-General Wood, May 20, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 217; Moss, Lemuel, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission*, p. 80.

army presented a danger so imminent and so glaring that such assistance very likely became an impelling necessity. Toward the end of April, a movement set on foot by a group of ladies in New York to meet this need was taken up by the Reverend Doctor Bellows and Doctors Van Buren, Harris and Harsen and presented to the President and other high officials.[1] Lincoln at first regarded it as a "fifth wheel to the coach", and others looked upon it with suspicion,[2] but opposition was speedily broken down and the endorsement of the acting surgeon-general gained. On May 22 this officer informed Cameron that the Medical Bureau would derive

> important and useful aid from the counsels and well-directed efforts of an intelligent and scientific commission . . . acting in cooperation with the Bureau in elaborating and applying such facts as might be elicited from the experience and more extended observation of those connected with armies with reference to the diet and hygiene of troops and the organization of military hospitals, etc.[3]

Accordingly the Secretary of War on June 7 appointed a commission of distinguished physicians and scientists and instructed it to direct its inquiries into the inspection of recruits and enlisted men, the sanitary condition of the volunteers, the restoration and preservation of health and of securing the general comfort and efficiency of troops, to the supplying of cooks, nurses and hospitals and other subjects of a similar nature.[4]

Immediately the Sanitary Commission began its work and so great was its activity and the rapidity of its progress that

[1] Stillé, Charles, J., *History of the United States Sanitary Commission*, pp. 35, 40-43.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-60, *passim.*

[3] Wood to Cameron, May 22, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 225.

[4] Cameron to Mixed Commission, June 7, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

before Bull Run it was ready to aid the sick and had taken salutary measures for the well-being of the troops. Indeed, the deplorable insufficiency of the regular medical service necessitated a large share of its duties being taken over by the commission during the first year of the war. Its particular aim was the prevention of disease, and its activities in this regard spread into every field of hygiene and sanitation, but thousands of unfortunates were afforded relief by its agents, and the sick and maimed transported to their homes. Frederick Law Olmsted very early became general secretary. Through his magnificent organizing and administrative capacity the work was directed with efficiency, system and power, so well that its services far outclassed the bureau it was intended to supplement and assist.[1]

The splendid example set by this commission in caring for the health and comfort of soldiers, doubtless led to the conception and formation of another to care for the "spiritual good of the soldiers in the army and incidentally their intellectual improvement and social and physical comfort."[2] December 13, 1861, Cameron approved of the setting-up of the United States Christian Commission, sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association, and pledged the department's aid to its purposes.[3] Much was done by it as the war progressed to encourage wholesome living; religious literature, books, magazines and newspapers were provided, reading-rooms established, stationery furnished and other useful services performed for men in field and camp.[4]

[1] Stillé, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68, 76-80, 85-108; Trobriand, Regius de, *Four Years with the Army of the Potomac*, pp. 247-248; Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. v, pp. 245 *et seq.*

[2] E. S. Janes *et al.* to President of Y. M. C. A., Nov. 16, 1861, Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 109; Cameron to G. H. Stuart, Dec. 13, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 742-743.

[4] Moss, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-213, *passim*, 283, 292, 485-486; Rhodes, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-262.

Perhaps no single extra-departmental agency was of greater usefulness in the first days of war than the Union Defence Committee of New York City, a voluntary organization already mentioned, which sprang into being as a result of a mass meeting in that city, April 20, 1861, and the action of the local Chamber of Commerce. Its motive was "to represent the citizens in the collection of funds and the transaction of such other business in aid of the movement of the government as the public interests may require." To the funds which it immediately collected the city added $1,000,000.[1] As has been shown, during the dark days of Washington's isolation the Committee gave wholehearted support to General Wool in his efforts to supply the imperative military needs of the national capital and the several states. When that crisis had passed it plunged into the important task of organizing, equipping and dispatching New York troops to Washington. Of the whole number of regiments from the state called into service during the first eight months, sixty-six received assistance from the Committee in some degree. Four were organized, uniformed and completely equipped by it, twenty-five others received "effectual aid," and the remaining thirty-seven were provided with sums of less than $3,000 each.[2] In other fields its work was equally energetic. It informed the State Department of enemy activities in the North, and the War Department of the military progress in the loyal states. It shipped mattresses to the capital for the troops, cots to the Washington hospitals at the request of Miss Dix and hospital stores to Annapolis. To about 12,000 families of volunteers

[1] *Reports, Resolutions and Documents of the Union Defence Committee,* pp. 81-82; Officers of U. D. C. to Cameron, Dec. 31, 1861, *Union Defence Committee,* pp. 191-192; Committee to P. A. Porter, Jan. 25, 1862, *ibid.,* p. 200; *New York Herald,* July 9, 1861.

[2] P. M. Wetmore to T. Hillhouse, Dec. 16, 1861, *Union Defence Committee,* pp. 196-197.

in service it also gave sympathetic and assiduous attention, distributing in the first few months of 1861 the sum of $230,000 for their comfort.[1]

To make their assistance more effectual in the beginning, Seward had through personal solicitation persuaded Chase, Cameron and General Scott to give power of attorney to various members of the Committee to act in emergencies for their departments,[2] but, as the spring wore on and the Secretaries gained better control, the work of the Committee occasionally came into conflict with that of department agents and departmental plans; controversies usually resulted. Consequently its activities and influence gradually diminished but it remained in existence throughout the war, meeting intermittently to clear up old accounts and to perform special business.[3]

Aside from the small and defective organization of the War Department and the difficulties resulting from the severance of communications with the North, still another factor which tended to retard large scale preparation at the outset was the earnest desire of Lincoln and Seward to avoid everything which smacked of "a spirit of revenge" toward the South. They were anxious to conduct military affairs in such a manner that reconciliation could be easily accomplished. Lincoln on April 27 assured a special agent of the Union Defence Committee that the administration would act with all dispatch and decision, but Seward on the following

[1] P. M. Wetmore to T. Hillhouse, Dec. 16, 1861, *Union Defence Committee*, pp. 24-25; I. Bell *et al.* to Executive Committee, Aug. 31, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 253; S. Draper *et al.* to Cameron, May 3, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 148.

[2] G. T. M. Davis to Wetmore, May 1, 1861, *Union Defence Committee*, p. 155.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-38, *passim*. In the course of its labors the Executive Committee of the organization held 112 meetings, but of these 97 were held between April 23 and December 31, 1861. During the early days of war meetings were held twice daily.

day insisted that its sole design was to preserve the integrity of the Union by winning back the disloyal to loyalty and not to wage an aggressive war.[1] These were hopes, aspirations, born of a love of peace and union, stimulated by an indominitable optimism on Seward's part, yet soon to be dispelled by grim realities.

Indeed, on the very day that Lincoln spoke he took significant steps in ordering Cameron under an act of 1846 to raise twenty-five additional regiments of regulars to serve three years unless sooner discharged, and to have a manufactory of arms erected at Rock Island, Illinois.[2] About the same time the government was discarding the idea of relying upon three-months' militia and preparing to call all volunteers for three years' service, a measure which was as commendable as it was unconstitutional. The initiative in this appears to have been taken by Chase who drafted a call for 65,000 men. Lincoln quickly seized upon the suggestion and on May 3 issued a call for 42,034 three-year volunteers and combined with it a call for 22,714 officers and men to be added to the regular army and 18,000 additional seamen for naval service. Details as to enrollment and organization were to be made known by the War Department.[3] This was done, but not as a result of Cameron's effort.

[1] Davis to Wetmore, May 1, 1861, *Union Defence Committee*, pp. 153-156.

[2] Cameron to Thomson, Apr. 27, 1861, Military Book No. 43; Cameron to Patterson, Apr. 28, 1861; Cameron to Dennison, Apr. 29, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 125, 131. In a letter to Senator Chandler on Apr. 29, Cameron said the regulars were to serve for two years, unless sooner discharged. This was probably a mistake. As early as the 26th the Secretary of War had informed Governor Olden of New Jersey that the only troops beyond the announced quota which could be received would be those volunteering for three years. He did not indicate whether they were to serve as regulars, but this seems likely. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[3] Scott to Patterson, Apr. 29, 1861, *Butler Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 56; Chase to J. T. Trowbridge, Mar. 31, 1864, quoted in Schuckers, J. W., *Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase*, p. 419; Lincoln's Proclamation, May 3, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

Either because of a lack of confidence in the Secretary of War or because he was already overwhelmed with the militia recruits, the President, with Cameron's consent, entrusted this new administrative problem to the Secretary of the Treasury. Chase in turn delegated the drawing-up of a plan of organization to Assistant Adjutant-General McDowell and Captain W. B. Franklin, then serving as supervising architect of the Treasury, but reserved to himself the right to accept or reject their propositions. The result of their labors, somewhat altered by Chase for political reasons, was accepted by him, approved by the War Department and issued May 4. Subsequently the plan proposed was adopted by Congress and became the basis of organization for all the federal forces.[1]

This was the beginning of Chase's War Department activities. They were soon to grow. Before long he was exercising semi-military authority in Virginia and what became West Virginia, and to him for a time was committed the principal charge of affairs in Kentucky and Tennessee.[2] But the Secretary of State was not crowded out by Chase's initial entrance into military affairs. In the last of April he was visiting the seventy-six year old general-in-chief "almost hourly", doubtless doing what he could to lighten his burden. A few days later he was ordering the Union Defence Committee to find and furnish 5000 stand of arms to the Union men of Kentucky, and dispatching directions and information from the War Department.[3] And Cameron

[1] Chase to Trowbridge, Mar. 31, 1864, Schuckers, *op. cit.*; Upton, *Military Policy*, pp. 233-234; Hart, Albert B., *Salmon Portland Chase*, pp. 211-212; Ganoe, *History of the United States Army*, pp. 251-252.

[2] Chase to Trowbridge, Mar. 31, 1864, Schuckers, *op. cit.*; Hart, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214.

[3] Davis to Wetmore, May 1, 1861, *Union Defence Committee*, p. 156; Seward to Blatchford *et al.*, May 3, 1861, p. 177; Seward to S. Draper, May 3 and 6, 1861, p. 213.

too was engrossed in the work of the office but, it was reported, the applicants for place and favor so besieged him as to consume his time and injudiciously divert his attention from the vital things.[1] He had neither Seward's knack nor Seward's desire to brush aside the trucklers. There was patronage galore and he was in his element.

[1] C. H. Haswell to Draper, May 3, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 159.

CHAPTER IV

Days of Confusion

Five weeks of his peace-time administration and three weeks of war did little to establish Cameron in the confidence of the northern people. Among the governors there was nothing short of a strong distrust and a widespread impatience with his work. Even after communications with the capital had been reestablished, they had been unable to get more than meagre satisfaction. They wrote and they telegraphed, making known their various wants and requesting action, but too often received less than they needed or perhaps nothing at all. Particularly exasperating was the fact that they could not get adequate responses from the Secretary as to the quotas of the states under the President's call of May 3, and also that orders were not forthcoming to forward troops already recruited and organized. Inquiries were put off with the promise that the adjutant-general would give full instructions "in a day or two", but days stretched into weeks. The governor of Massachusetts was told that this officer would advise him immediately, but it was actually eighteen days before he learned the state's quota. In the interval companies from all parts of the commonwealth were volunteering and pressing for acceptance, but Andrew could do nothing but offer kind words of assurance and hope that they would be taken.[1] Cameron was demonstrating almost none of that skill and capacity which had

[1] Cameron to Andrew, May 7, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 171; Schouler, William, *History of Massachusetts in the Civil War*, vol. i, pp. 132, 165.

made him a man of affairs in private life. Indeed, in his department there seemed to be indecision and, worst of all, a lack of a clear-cut program.

Under such circumstances the work which the governors began in April was of necessity carried on in the succeeding months. In some respects it grew in intensity. The dual nature of our federal and state governmental system and the military policy made this under any circumstances to some degree inevitable, but the existing conditions made it absolutely imperative. Fortunately there were at the head of most of the states men of great earnestness and vigor, and they had the generous and staunch backing of their legislatures. Andrew of Massachusetts, Morgan of New York, Curtin of Pennsylvania and Morton of Indiana stood forth pre-eminently, but others like Sprague of Rhode Island, Dennison of Ohio and Yates of Illinois were extremely active and forceful in directing popular enthusiasm into useful war channels.

Andrew and his co-workers in Massachusetts "took up the war" and surged ahead "as if there was not an inch of red tape in the world." [1] The legislature confirmed all that they did and vested in the governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, full power and authority to provide additional troops, to appoint officers and agents, to adjust and settle accounts between the state and general government, and to pay out funds for the maintenance of troops. A Union fund of $3,000,000 was authorized to be raised. In April the state treasurer had been permitted to borrow $200,000, to be held as an emergency fund for military purposes.[2]

In addition to conducting affairs in his own state, Andrew gave attenion to other New England states, becoming a sort

[1] Andrew to Lincoln, May 3, 1861, quoted in Schouler, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57, 184.

of war minister for the region. Toward the last of April he loaned to Maine some of the state's equipment and pleaded with Wool in New York to give orders for the New Hampshire and Connecticut troops to advance. As for the Massachusetts troops, he intended to start some without "waiting for manners" much longer.[1] Late in May he wired to Governor Dennison that Massachusetts would buy or contract for any equipment Ohio desired, if the word were given.[2]

The New York legislature on April 16 made a grant of $3,000,000 to cover the cost of recruiting and equipping the state militia so that there too the work was able to go forward with rapidity and without embarrassment. The same act also authorized the calling forth of 30,000 two-year volunteers, which could upon requisition from the President be mustered into the United States service as a part of the state's militia.[3] By the latter part of May these 30,000 volunteers had been raised, accepted by the state military board and organized into thirty-eight regiments. Regimental and field officers were soon chosen and by July 12, the entire contingent had left for the seat of war.[4]

In April the Illinois legislature, called into session by Governor Yates, appropriated $3,500,000 for war purposes. Of this amount $1,000,000 was to organize and equip ten regiments called out by the state, $500,000 to buy arms and build a powder magazine and $2,000,000 for general purposes of state defense and national aid.[5] Here too men

[1] Pearson, *Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 207-208.

[2] Schouler, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[3] R. Campbell to Cameron, June 4, 1861, enclosure, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 250-251.

[4] Governor Morgan's Message, Jan. 7, 1862, *Messages of the Governors of the State of New York*, vol. v, p. 402.

[5] Appletons' *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1861, p. 368.

flocked to enlist and the governor soon found himself suffering the embarrassment of an excess of troops over the quota assigned.

Elsewhere the same spirit and determination was manifest. Toward the end of April Morton declared "Indiana is loyal to the core and will expend her best blood and treasure without limit. . . ." [1] But the powers in Washington were too slow and seemed to discriminate. His ire was aroused when he learned that the War Department had accepted twenty-one regiments from Ohio for three years, while his own persistent efforts had resulted in only four being taken from Indiana. Immediately he wrote Caleb Smith, Secretary of the Interior: "The three months' men tendered their services for three years and are rejected. What can this mean? Why this discrimination against Indiana? . . . Will you not see that justice is done Indiana?" [2] On April 17 the Rhode Island legislature appropriated $500,000 for war work, and Governor Sprague pressed preparations to the utmost.[3] Where legislatures were not in session when Sumter fell, prompt measures were taken to assemble them to enact war provisions. Even Maryland by the middle of May was actively supporting the North. Four regiments were raised there to defend the state and the national capital.[4]

Perhaps the most far-sighted and stimulating action of all was in Cameron's home state of Pennsylvania. There his old political foe, Andrew G. Curtin, was chief magistrate and the leader in pushing war measures. When the legislature met in extra session on April 30, Curtin informed it that the time had passed for "temporizing and forbearing

[1] Morton to Cameron, Apr. 28, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 126.

[2] Foulke, *Morton*, vol. i, p. 129, footnote.

[3] *New York Tribune*, Apr. 18, 1861.

[4] Hicks to Cameron, May 13, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 190; Hicks' General Order No. 2, May 14, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 199.

with this rebellion," that during the isolation of Washington, at the suggestion of General Patterson, he had issued a call for twenty-six regiments in addition to those already summoned, and now he appealed to the legislature to organize them into the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. The response was immediate, fifteen regiments were provided for and a loan authorized to defray their expenses. The regiments were carefully officered, organized and placed in camps entirely at state expense. The law arranging for their organization stipulated, however, that they should be subject to call and muster by the federal government whenever they were needed.[1] It was certainly evident that so far as the states were concerned, the administration in Washington would not want for full cooperation if it but made known its desires. Indeed, one may well wonder, viewing conditions in the War Department at the time, whether the government could have risen to the gigantic task before it, had there not been this magnificent state response.

But it was soon painfully evident that the states were far in advance of the administration. A clash between Cameron and the governors was certain to occur. In accordance with the popular will they were for making war at once, swift and overwhelming,[2] whereas the department was moving slowly, almost feeling its way. Presently Cameron began to check their progress and "cool the ardor" so abundantly manifest everywhere in the North. There had been misunderstandings almost from the start over the quotas to be furnished, but a number of new factors quickly entered in to complicate matters further. The governors in the first flush

[1] Egle, *Curtin*, pp. 43-44; McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, p. 476; Egle, *History of Pennsylvania*, pp. 260-261; Weeden, *War Government*, pp. 89, 157-158.

[2] G. A. Grow to Cameron, May 5, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 160; E. Fairbanks to Draper, May 7, 1861, Union Defence Committee Letters, MSS.

of enthusiasm had accepted more troops than asked for, and now were making requests, directly and indirectly to the Secretary, for the acceptance of regiments in excess of their quotas. But by this time the administration had decided to rely on three-year men instead of short-term militia. The President's call of May 3 indicated this. On the 6th Cameron answered the appeals for additional acceptances by stating that thereafter only volunteers for three years' service should be sent forward. Such of the three-months' men as were unwilling to serve for the longer term should be replaced, if possible, by men who were willing to accept the longer period of enlistment.[1] The order led to endless confusion.

The delay of the department in informing the states what the quotas under the President's second summons would be left the governors in a quandary. Were the troops converted from militia into volunteers in accordance with Cameron's order to be considered a part of the states' quotas under the new call or were the troops under this call to be in addition to them? And would the excess regiments accepted by the governors under the first call be received by the War Department under the first requisition, or would they be applied under the second, or would they not be received at all? The situation was so confused that the governors did not know just what was expected of them, and one may well question whether Cameron himself knew where matters stood.

In the absence of specific information the governors forged ahead, acting partly under federal orders and partly under the authorizations of their legislatures. As rapidly as men offered their services they were rushed to camps, organized, equipped as fully as possible and set in training. Cameron on the other hand was bent on keeping down the numbers. On May 8 he rejected an offer from Massa-

[1] Cameron to the governors, May 6, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 161.

chusetts to furnish six fully equipped regiments in addition to the quota which might be called for under the proclamation of May 3. They would serve three years or for the war.[1] The four regiments of three-months' militia from Maryland, just organized, were also rejected and Governor Hicks was informed that the President had commissioned a citizen of Frederick to raise Maryland's three-year quota.[2] When the new quotas under the second call of several of the states were finally announced on May 15 and 16, Cameron sent out word that it was "important to reduce rather than to enlarge" the numbers of troops and that under no conditions were men in excess of the quotas to be received. Where this was the case the excess numbers should be discharged.[3]

Indignant at this news Governor Buckingham of Connecticut informed Cameron on May 18 that his communication of the 16th presented the state's quota in a very different light from that in which the executive had understood and was acting. He said:

You first made a call for one regiment for three months. I called that, and, independent of your action, organized two others for three months, and tendered their services to the War Department, which were declined. I then went to Washington, and stated my position first to General Scott, as I first saw him, and he said the Department could not use the three-months' men to advantage, but wanted men for three years. I told him that if he would accept the two regiments already organized, I would organize two more to take their place when their time should expire. He said that under such circumstances or with such assurances the Department would accept them. I called on your Excellency the next day and merely stated in a very brief manner my business, and I understood your Excellency to say you

[1] Schouler, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150; Pearson, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225.

[2] Cameron to Hicks, May 17, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 210.

[3] Cameron to the governors, May 15 and 16, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 203-204. The Massachusetts quota did not arrive until May 22.

had decided the previous day to meet my wishes in the matter.[1]

At the time of writing the first of the three-year regiments was ready for mustering into the federal service.[2] Two weeks later the Secretary yielded to Governor Buckingham and accepted all.[3]

Another dispute arose between Governor Dennison of Ohio and Cameron as to how many regiments would be accepted from that state. Here Cameron held to the specified quota of thirteen three-months' and eight three-year regiments. Even the intercession of Secretary Chase failed in having extra Ohio troops received.[4] More surprising still was the fact that Cameron declined to receive all the additional Pennsylvania regiments summoned at the suggestion of General Patterson. He would accept only ten three-year regiments in addition to the short-term militia contingents. He asserted that the general had no authority to make any requisitions in the first place. Well might the indignant governor reply: "It would be well for me to understand how authority is divided, so we can move with certainty, and the ardor of the people of this state should not be again cooled by changes." [5]

Nothing indicates more clearly the general confusion as to the quotas, terms of service and the delay in informing the governors just what was expected of them than a letter from Morton to the Secretary on May 14. He reviewed a situation which was duplicated in the correspondence with numerous other executives:

[1] Buckingham to Cameron, May 18, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cameron to Buckingham, June 3, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 246.

[4] Dennison to Cameron, May 19, 1861; Cameron to Dennison, May 22, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 217, 227; Chase to Dennison, May 16, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[5] Cameron to Curtin, May 3, 1861, Military Book No. 44, MSS.; Curtin to Cameron, May 6, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 167.

By telegraph April 20 and written dispatch April 23, I tendered you six additional regiments, stating that I should put them in camp subject to the Government order, at least for a time. By written dispatch of April 26 you say that if the six regiments put into camp by me should be disposed to volunteer for three years they would be accepted. By written dispatch of May 3 you say it is contemplated to make another requisition for troops to serve during the war. By two different telegraphs received May 3 you say as soon as determined how many regiments will be received from this State, which will be in a day or two, I should be informed. By telegraph of May 7 you say the Adjutant General will give full instructions in a day or two, and that probably two regiments would be called from this State. We have received no information from Adjutant-General or any other source, although I have telegraphed frequently asking answer. The men are on hand in camp at heavy expense to the State, and it is due them and the State that an answer be promptly given.[1]

Complicating and irritating this already disordered and distressing state of affairs, and probably in some measure explaining the Secretary's curtailments was the very general shortage of equipment. Cameron admitted that the government was embarrassed by the "generous outpouring of volunteers" and added that "one of the main difficulties is to keep down the proportions of the army."[2] Lincoln in his message to Congress, July 4, supported the same view by saying: "One of the greatest perplexities of the government is to avoid receiving troops faster than it can provide for them."[3] Only in the case of arms was there anything like a sufficient supply at this time and here the inadequate facilities of distribution discounted their usefulness.[4] Strive as

[1] Morton to Cameron, May 14, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

[2] Cameron to Lincoln, July 1, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 303.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 316.

[4] Scott desired to keep the best class of arms for the troops serving for the long period so that they might be properly equipped when employed. Townsend to McClellan, Apr. 30, 1861, McClellan MSS.

the government might, it was impossible to furnish all the supplies and equipment that were needed. They simply could not be had on such short notice. The only government-owned armory in the country for supplying arms was that at Springfield, Massachusetts, and its capacity was between 2,500 and 3,000 arms per month. The government had no foundry at all and had long been accustomed to purchase its cannon.[1]

In view of these conditions it was obliged to rely heavily on the private establishments. Orders of all kinds were given for clothing and other accoutrement, but not enough were forthcoming to meet the needs. McClellan very early reported himself in the predicament of a commanding officer "with nothing but men—no arms or supplies." [2] May 10 Major Porter wrote that he was getting volunteers ready for duty under most annoying circumstances—" Equipping and fitting them out with nothing in store or likely to be, and pushed by the government to send on regiments quickly—but not till fully equipped." [3] Four days later, John Tucker informed Cameron that the discomforts of the troops in Washington and Philadelphia were very great and needed remedying. Complaints were constant and well-founded that those in Philadelphia were suffering, almost starving. Ohio troops begged on the steets of the city for food. In Harrisburg soldiers were treated " more like brutes than men," and yet there were rations close by.[4] Here again, the difficulty seemed to be faulty distribution.

Ever impatient of delay and foreseeing that there would be shortages, the governors, supported by their legislatures,

[1] Ripley to Cameron, June 8, 1861, War Department Files, MSS.; Ripley to Cameron, June 19, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 279.

[2] McClellan to Scott, Apr. 23, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[3] Porter to McClellan, May 10, 1861, *ibid.*

[4] Tucker to Cameron, May 14, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 197-198.

as has already been mentioned, struck out independently to meet their needs and trusted to reimbursement later.[1] It seemed to be the only solution to the problem, despite the fact that it meant pernicious competition among their representatives and with other agents who were crowding the local markets, and soon resulted in a similar condition in those abroad. As early as April 20, William D. Lewis of Philadelphia informed the Secretary of War that due to the shortage of modern arms the local committee of public safety had decided to obtain them in Europe.[2] About the same time Massachusetts sent an agent abroad with a credit of $250,000, and other states were invited to utilize his services.[3] A New York agent went with $500,000, authorized to buy 25,000 stand of arms. His activities resulted in the procurement of 19,000 Enfield muskets at an outlay of $375,000.[4] May 30 Robert Dale Owen was commissioned in Indiana to buy 10,000 rifles and 1,000 carbines in the United States or in Europe, and the order was from time to time enlarged. By the close of his services in February, 1863, he had purchased nearly 33,000 rifles and carbines and other small arms at a cost of over $750,000, besides expending about $4,000 for cavalry equipment, $50,000 for blankets and $85,000 for overcoats.[5] Another forward step taken by the governor of Indiana early in the struggle was the setting-up of a state arsenal at Indianapolis for the manufacture of ammunition. This was done on his own responsibility in order that his

[1] Cameron to Morgan, May 8, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 177; Governor Morgan's Message, Jan. 7, 1862, *Messages of the Governors*, vol. v, pp. 406-407.

[2] Lewis to Cameron, Apr. 20, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

[3] Andrew to Cameron, Apr. 25, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 112; Andrew to Evarts, Apr. 22, 1861, Union Defence Committee Letters, MSS.; Pearson, *Andrew*, vol. i, p. 192.

[4] Governor Morgan's Message, Jan. 7, 1862, *loc. cit.*, p. 402; Appletons' *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1861, p. 523; *New York Herald*, Jan. 8, 1862.

[5] Holliday, John H., "Indianapolis and the Civil War," *Indiana Historical Society Publications*, vol. iv, p. 558.

troops might not go into the field without means to attack and repel the enemy. Before long he had an establishment employing 600 persons, many of them women. Besides furnishing state troops there was a surplus to sell to the federal government.[1]

It was under conditions such as these that the administration and the states struggled through the spring of 1861 in attempting to outfit soldiers for service in the Union armies. They were irregular and frequently costly,[2] but probably were more fruitful of accomplishment than if the central government had acted alone. The efficient Meigs had not yet taken the post as quartermaster-general; Ripley was new in his capacity as head of the Ordnance Bureau and, it must be remembered, none of the offices was equipped and ready for the gigantic problems before it. Both the Commissary and Quartermaster Bureaus were, under existing laws, limited in their powers and functions, and the Secretary was obliged to recommend an enlargement of them when Congress met in July.[3]

[1] Foulke, *Morton*, vol. i, pp. 179-180. When the arsenal accounts were finally settled, it was found that there was a profit of $75,000. Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, pp. 547-548.

[2] In his December report Cameron said: "Combinations among manufacturers, importers and agents for the sale of arms have in many cases caused an undue increase in prices." *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 702-703. The Committee on Contracts was far more caustic. It asserted: "The profits from the sale of arms to the government have been enormous, and realized, too, in many instances, even by our own citizens, through a system of brokerage as unprincipled and dishonest, as unfriendly to the success and welfare of the nation, as the plottings of actual treason. The system adopted at an early moment for the purchase of arms naturally encouraged this result." *House Report* No. 1, 37th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 34.

[3] Cameron to Lincoln, July 1, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 307. General Upton says that "Up to 1861 the Quartermaster-General could give no orders to persons outside his own officers; during the war he issued general orders to more than a hundred thousand employees, and became admiral of a fleet of more than a thousand vessels." *Military Policy*, p. x.

In addition to the conflicts and confusion over quotas, and the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the arming and equipping of troops, a very considerable number of incipient civil wars went on between the War Office and the states over other phases of army development. There were conflicts over the jurisdiction as regards troops, the term of enlistment and the appointment of officers, and others growing out of irregularities in allowing independent recruiting agencies to compete with state officials in raising regiments.

Under our system the states had almost full powers over the militia until they were sworn into the federal service, and the governors were prone to assert their full state rights in this regard, in spite of the fact that the war at hand had the question of state-rights as one of its principal causes. Much of the hard, exacting and tedious work of making trained soldiers out of private citizens was done under their supervision. With this, as a sort of compensation and acknowledgment of the duality of the system, went the privilege of selecting the regimental and commanding militia officers. In the call for the first quota from New York and Pennsylvania, two major-generals were asked for from each of these states and one from Ohio. Also the several states were requested to furnish seventeen brigadiers and 3,549 commissioned officers of lower ranking.[1] This power of appointment gave to the governors a certain degree of control even after militia regiments were mustered into the federal service, for it was to them alone that officers must look for retention and promotion, and through them alone could depleted files of regiments be filled. Such arrangements could not help but be fruitful of disagreements and disputes.

Complicating them was the fact mentioned, that scarcely was the training of militia well under way, when the administration decided to request that they change their status

[1] *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 69, table.

from three-months' militia to three-year volunteers. This change, aside from extending the term, divested the governors of considerable power in that it weakened their control over the troops, and subjected the latter more completely to federal regulations. Where men declined to accept the longer period they were encouraged to withdraw from the service, or at least received broad intimations that they were no longer wanted. Only to maintain the good faith of the government were they kept on the muster-rolls.[1] Very large numbers did stay, and it was they who constituted the main body of the Union forces that fought and fled from Bull Run in July.

More aggravating still was the case of those enlisted as volunteers. They were intended to be a part of the national army, yet due to the division of power in recruiting and organizing, the states exercised a partial authority over them. When the call was issued for them it became the function of the governors to fill the quotas, put them in readiness for service and to provide all officers below the rank of brigadier-general.[2] Thus a part of the state-control militia system was grafted on to what was supposed to be a federal organization. Secretary Chase was mainly responsible for this in the beginning, for when the plans of organization were drawn by Major McDowell and Captain Franklin he had insisted, Franklin afterwards alleged, that the regiments retain their state character, saying "he would rather have no regiments raised in Ohio than that they should not be known as Ohio regiments." To use the words of Franklin, "Here his state-rights feelings came in."[3] It was partly to meet

[1] Townsend to McClellan, May 15, 1861; A. Baird to McClellan, June 20, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[2] In the cases where the President gave permission for individuals or organizations to raise regiments, he frequently appointed the regimental officers.

[3] Franklin to Upton, Nov. 9, 1877, cited in Upton, *Military Policy*, p. 234 and footnote.

this sort of objections and to temper the fears of undue centralization that the governors were permitted to name regimental officers, but from the standpoint of military efficiency it was unwise. That it led to a misconception of the real character of the troops is evidenced by the fact that many of the Senators and Representatives later in the year held that the volunteers were militia, or state troops whose officers under the Constitution could only be appointed by the governors of their states.[1]

Both the governors and the administration hung on tenaciously to such appointing privileges as they had. In June Morton strenuously objected when the President appointed colonels for three regiments of Indiana volunteers. He declared it had a bad effect and was convinced it was the work of politicians in Washington and an indignity to himself who had all the responsibility of raising the regiments.[2] At another time Governor Morgan objected when Cameron declined to recognize John A. Dix and James S. Wadsworth as major-generals of New York volunteers. Both men had been appointed under the Secretary's authorization of April 15 for two major-generals of militia, but when the appointments were made on the 8th and 16th of May respectively, Dix and Wadsworth were assigned to the volunteer organizations recently recruited.[3] The difficulty here was a misunderstanding as to the type of troops which was being offered. The New York law authorizing their recruitment distinctly stated that they were to be two-year

[1] Franklin to Upton, *op. cit.*, p. 259. The act of July 22, 1861 providing for a volunteer army of 500,000 men expressly stated that the governors furnishing the troops should have the right to appoint the field, staff and company officers for the regiments, as did a supplementary act of July 25. *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, pp. 269, 274.

[2] Morton to Cameron, June 22, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 290.

[3] Morgan to Cameron, May 28, 1861; Cameron to Morgan, June 3, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 241, 246-247.

volunteers but a part of the state militia and when received into federal service were to be considered as such.[1] Cameron, on the other hand, considered them regular volunteers being received as part of the national army. From this view the governor's action was contrary to regulations, and since these were the type of troops called for, Cameron quite rightfully objected. He admitted with his usual political suavity the "high character and eminent abilities" of both men, but declared that if the rules were suspended in this instance, it would require the President to surrender the appointments to state authorities in nearly every other case.[2] When Pennsylvania also attempted to send a major-general and brigadier-generals with her volunteers, the Secretary again positively declined to allow it, contending that he was without authority to receive them and would not sanction it if Andrew Jackson were the major-general.[3]

Another series of conflicts resulting from the diversity of authority concerned the term of enlistment. In several instances the state legislatures had authorized the raising of volunteer regiments before the President's appeal for three-year men. In Maine they were enlisted for two years and when three-year men were asked for, Governor Washburne declared he had no right under the law of the state to receive men for the longer period.[4] The situation was the same in Vermont. Cameron was informed that if he would not accept two-year volunteers, the governor could not comply with any future requisition without calling another extra session of the legislature.[5] In New York the term for thirty-

[1] Campbell to Cameron, June 4, 1861, enclosure, *ibid.*, pp. 250-251.

[2] Cameron to Morgan, June 3, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 246-247; Pearson, *Wadsworth*, pp. 63-64. Wadsworth and Dix were subsequently appointed by the President to be major-generals of volunteers.

[3] J. A. Wright to Curtin, June 25, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 297.

[4] Washburne to Cameron, May 4, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 159.

[5] Fairbanks to Cameron, May 7, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 174.

eight regiments authorized was also two years.[1] In Indiana a state law permitted six regiments of volunteers which the governor had raised on his own responsibility to be received into the service of the state for one year, and subject to any requisition the President might make.[2]

The case of the New York volunteers resulted in a very acrimonious and protracted controversy and is worthy of detailed consideration because it reveals a number of complications which were to some extent duplicated elsewhere and shows well the disordered state of affairs attendant upon the whole recruiting business. Under the first Presidential requisition, New York was asked to furnish seventeen regiments of three-months' men. On May 3 Cameron accepted in their stead the thirty-eight regiments of two-year volunteers which the New York legislature had authorized in April, the state agreeing to uniform and arm them since the government was unprepared to do so.[3] The same day the President's proclamation calling for three-year men was issued. Governor Morgan answered this by stating to Cameron that one of the state's two-year regiments had already been forwarded, and that the men constituting the remainder of the contingent from New York, thirty-seven regiments of two-year men, in accordance with state law, were moving to the depot of rendezvous. The period of enlistment could not be extended to three years.[4] To this notice the Secretary

[1] R. Campbell to Cameron, June 4, 1861, enclosure of copy of act of Apr. 16, 1861 of New York legislature, *ibid.*, p. 250.

[2] Foulke, *Morton*, vol. i, p. 128. Four regiments were organized from among these in answer to the President's call of May 3. The rest of the one-year men remained in state service.

[3] C. G. Myers to Cameron, May 1, 1861; Cameron to Myers, May 3, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 143, 151. The government was to be relieved of the New York short-term militiamen in the federal service as soon as the volunteers were mustered in.

[4] Morgan to Cameron, May 7, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 172.

made no reply until May 13, when he requested Morgan to send on at once five regiments of three-year volunteers and to forward no more three-months' men without special orders from the department or General Scott. The same day he requested that ten regiments reported on May 11 as mustered should be sent at once, adding they were "expected to come to serve three years or during the war."[1] On the 14th Morgan replied that he would send the ten regiments but that they were to serve "for two years or for the war."[2]

Apparently sensing that there would be trouble over the quota, terms and the number to be forwarded, Cameron then dispatched an agent, Abraham Van Vechten, to Albany to explain the views and wishes of the War Department.[3] And trouble most certainly came. The department was issuing such bungling and contradictory orders that it was inevitable. It was almost impossible to determine just what was expected by it, for in addition to the two forwarding orders of the 13th, the chief clerk, Sanderson, at the direction of the Secretary, informed Van Vechten at Albany on the 15th that the department could accept "only eleven regiments to serve two or three years, or during the war, making twenty-eight regiments from New York in all; that is to say seventeen for three months and eleven for the war."[4] On the very same day Cameron informed Morgan that he had never intended to accept more than twenty-eight regiments from New York and that only eleven could be taken under the second proclamation of the President, these "to serve for two years, or during the war." Again on that day he sent word to the governor to hasten five regiments to the capital

[1] J. M. Read, Jr. to Cameron, May 11, 1861; Cameron to Morgan, May 13, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 188-189, 191.

[2] Morgan to Cameron, May 14, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 201.

[3] Cameron to Morgan, May 13, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 192.

[4] Sanderson to Van Vechten, May 15, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 206.

and nine to Fort Monroe, all to be "three-years' volunteers," and all to be taken from troops then assembled in New York City. He also wrote to Hamilton Fish of the Union Defence Committee saying that Governor Morgan had been requested to send five regiments to Washington and nine to Fort Monroe "to serve during the war." If the governor declined, then the Committee should carry out the order with regiments which it had assembled in New York City.[1]

That the conflicts with the Empire State were causing anxiety to the administration was evidenced by Seward's letter to the Union Defence Committee on May 13. It was impossible, he said, to set down in writing the difficulties of calling and moving troops. He wished that Morgan and the state's military board "could fall in with our plan of recruiting and sending forward the regiments. *Here* the difficulties that exist in New York are multiplied by similar experiences in all the States." As for himself, he was doing his best in trying to get all the troops ordered accepted and under way.[2]

Confused as this situation was, it had coupled with it another in which the Union Defence Committee was involved. As heretofore, the Committee was extremely active, serving in every possible capacity in preparing and forwarding the means for an aggressive prosecution of the war. Early in May it was busy getting ready troops which were organizing in and about New York City, and was pressing the governor to receive them and send them on to Washington. In some instances, however, he contended that they did not comply with the government's needs. Also there appears to have been a feeling that the Committee's actions were in interference with the prerogatives of the authorities

[1] Cameron to Morgan; Cameron to Fish, May 15, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 204-206.

[2] Seward to Union Defence Committee, May 13, 1861, Union Defence Committee Letters, MSS.

in Albany.[1] Morgan and the military board were a firm, hard-headed group, intent on keeping control of the state's military affairs in their own hands, if possible.

But in George L. Schuyler, its permanent agent in Washington, the Committee had an energetic and resourceful man, ever active in pressing its cause. To aid him in pushing matters two members early in May visited the capital. They met the President, General Scott and several of the Secretaries, but found these men in conflict among themselves. Scott and Cameron had been and still were at odds over the forwarding of New York troops, the former believing that for the present a gun and ammunition were sufficient equipment to justify their advance to Washington, the latter favoring a complete outfit for camp and field. Lincoln professed to be governed in all his movements "*militaires*" by General Scott. The Committee agents were unsuccessful in their attempt to see Cameron, but observed that his department was "enveloped in contract *expedients*." On the whole, the trip to Washington convinced them that "there must be a different feeling from that which now exists among the members of the Cabinet itself," and that there was little opening for the general usefulness of the New York organization except when errors and omissions required their services.[2]

Notwithstanding this discouraging news, and because of fresh evidence of the governor's unwillingness to accept any further troops organized in the city, on May 14 a delegation of eight influential members of the Committee went to Washington to plead for the acceptance of regiments raised in New York City. They presented resolutions to the Presi-

[1] Morgan to Blatchford, May 10, 1861, Telegram Book, Union Defence Committee, MSS.; *Union Defence Committee*, pp. 26-29; Minutes of the Executive Committee, May 11, 1861, Union Defence Committee MSS.

[2] Draper and Marshall to Blatchford, May 9, 1861, quoted in Minutes of the Executive Committee, *ibid.*

dent and his Cabinet, and explained that owing to conflicting state and federal laws the city regiments could not be moved forward, thus causing displeasure to themselves and dissatisfaction to the community. This time the Committee was wholly successful. The President with the consent of Scott and the Cabinet accepted from it fourteen regiments including certain militia regiments if they would serve for three years. And Cameron very graciously sent the delegation home on the 16th by a special train.[1]

Chase gave two reasons for the President's action: first, the extraordinary zeal manifested by the organization when the capital was in danger, and secondly, he believed the President was influenced by the facts that the government must look mainly to New York for loans, and that the acceptance of these troops, the large increase of the force and the vigorous preparation of the Committee for an early forward movement would strengthen the federal credit and improve the terms of the loans.[2]

The delegation had scarcely made its exit when Seward became suspicious that there might still be trouble ahead with the arrangements because the order given by Cameron to the Committee had " something in it for the Governor to do in the case." He informed the President about this and then wrote to his trusty friend, Thurlow Weed, to warn him that Chase and Cameron were trying to deduct the fourteen regiments expected from the Committee from those ordered from the governor. " It is the P——, General S—— and I against the two C's." he said. " Tell the Governor in God's name to send on the whole quota. I will take care of it. The P—— is all right." [3] Lincoln decided to write also and

[1] Report of S. Sloan *et al.*, May 17, 1861, in Minutes of the Executive Committee, *ibid.*; *Union Defence Committee*, pp. 28-29.

[2] Chase to Dennison, May 16, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[3] Barnes, Thurlow W., *Memoirs of Thurlow Weed*, vol. ii, p. 333.

sent a message at once to one of the delegation saying he was alarmed "lest a see-sawing commences, by which neither your troops nor the Governor's will get along in any reasonable time. Now I want you to cut the knots and send them right along, five regiments here and nine to Fort Monroe, just as we understood when we parted." [1] And at his request, Scott on the same day wrote to Governor Morgan assuring him that the fourteen regiments of the Committee were not to be deducted from these accepted from the state officers, but added to them.[2]

But the trouble over New York troops was by no means over after all. While the three-cornered quarrel had been going on between the Committee, the governor and the War Department, Daniel E. Sickles asked permission to furnish a brigade. They would serve as volunteers for three years or longer, or as regulars.[3] The request was granted. May 18, by order of the President, Cameron informed Governor Morgan and the Union Defence Committee that the order for fourteen regiments "from the State of New York," given May 15, included a brigade of five regiments commanded by Sickles. But the Committee promptly replied that no such contingent was known to be in New York and indicated if there was such, it formed no part of the troops being raised by itself.[4] Sickles' brigade proved to be one of those independent aggregations authorized by the Washington authorities which had little more than officers, a nucleus and good intentions.

[1] Lincoln to C. H. Russell, May 16, 1861 (private), quoted in *Union Defence Committee*, pp. 185-186.

[2] Scott to Morgan, May 16, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 208.

[3] Sickles to Cameron, May 8 and 9, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 178, 183.

[4] Cameron to Fish, May 18, 1861, Union Defence Committee Letters, MSS.; Cameron to Morgan, May 18, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 215; Draper to Cameron, May 19, 1861, Dispatch Book, Union Defence Committee MSS.

Furthermore, the confusion and friction continued between the state officials and the Union Defence Committee with no immediate prospects of abatement. Both were preparing to fill the requisitions for regiments for Washington and Fort Monroe, Morgan acting under Cameron's order of the 15th, and the Committee upon one from the President. In addition it had the Secretary's order permitting it to act in the event that the governor refused. When appealed to on the 18th for assurances as to its own right to act independently, Cameron wired back to the Committee that he had never intended to confer upon it authority to send troops independent of Morgan, unless he refused to act.[1] As matters stood each agency felt justified in prosecuting its own work. But the governor was disgruntled and contended that the activities in New York City were interfering with his own.[2]

George L. Schuyler kept the interests of his organization before the President's attention, and was able to telegraph on the 21st that "the head of everything" was determined to carry out without interference the arrangements laid down. More orders would only add to the confusion.[3] The next day Lincoln wired to Morgan that he wished to see him "face to face" to iron out the existing troubles.[4] Permission was also given through Schuyler for a delegation from the Union Defence Committee to be present. If Morgan refused to come, Lincoln would act anyway. "Start a strong delegation with or ahead of your opponent," wrote Schuyler. "Do

[1] Draper to Cameron, May 18, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 215; Cameron to Draper, May 20, 1861, Telegram Book, Union Defence Committee MSS.

[2] Fish to Morgan, May 19, 1861; Morgan to Fish, May 21, 1861, Minutes of the Executive Committee, Union Defence Committee MSS.

[3] Schuyler to Fish, May 21, 1861, Telegram Book, Union Defence Committee MSS.

[4] Lincoln to Morgan, May 22, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 226.

not write or communicate with the second in office here." [1] That the Secretary and President were not working in unison was evident from the fact that on the same day that Lincoln called Morgan to Washington, Cameron ordered Colonel W. B. Franklin to go to New York to consult with the governor and the Committee and give a fresh statement of the views and wishes of the department.[2]

The governor declined to go to Washington. On May 23 Franklin made his first report to Cameron, stating that Morgan considered the first ten regiments sent forward in April as thirty-days' men, and quite outside the call for three-months' militia. In addition to these he considered himself entitled to send thirty-eight regiments. The Union Committee had forwarded four regiments and ten others were reported full, enrolled and ready for inspection on May 25. Sickles had only one regiment, and it was not a part of the fourteen of the Defence Committee. Another independent recruiting agency, Bartlett's naval brigade, was producing "a bad effect," it was said.[3]

The inspection of the Defence Committee's troops at the appointed time proved a surprise, however. There were only about 4,500 men present, and of these there was fit material for only four regiments. As a consequence, Franklin concluded that ten could not be furnished and earnestly recommended that the Committee content itself with four. He was convinced also that Sickles and Bartlett had gained their authority by misrepresentations. There was no evidence that either one could raise the necessary forces. He therefore believed both should be disbanded. Of the governor's efforts Franklin was more hopeful, but he added: ". . . The unlooked for clashings and delays have made me suspicious

[1] Schuyler to Fish, May 21, 1861, *loc. cit.*

[2] Cameron to Franklin, May 22, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 226.

[3] Franklin to Cameron, May 23, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 229.

of any statements made to me. . . ." He suggested that the knot could be cut if an officer of high rank with experience, power and full information were ordered to take charge of the whole business.[1]

At this same time the dispute between the state officers and Cameron over the state troops flared up again. When the adjutant-general of New York informed Cameron on May 22 that thirty-one of the thirty-eight regiments had already been mustered and the rest would be in a few days, Cameron promptly remonstrated that the number registered was in direct contravention to the positive order of the department stipulating only twenty-eight to be received.[2] More trouble came on the 27th. The United States officer mustering the state troops into federal service, it was found, had accepted several of the thirty-eight for only a three months' period. At once Morgan asked the Secretary for an order to muster them for two years, but received the cold reply that they would be accepted on a three-year basis, but not for two years.[3] Thus matters stood just as they were two weeks before, and so they remained for two weeks more. Finally on June 12, the War Department capitulated, but not until June 24 were the last of the thirty-eight regiments of two-year men received.[4]

The Union Defence Committee was not so fortunate. By June 21 only five of its regiments had been received, but it was ever busy and always persistent. The recruiting under its auspices went on; the usual pressure was exerted for having its troops received, and the usual resistance was encountered at the department. Cameron insisted he had

[1] Franklin to Cameron, May 26, 1861, and enclosure, *ibid.*, p. 237.

[2] Cameron to J. M. Read, Jr., May 24, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 233.

[3] Morgan to Cameron, May 27, 1861; Cameron to Morgan, May 28, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 239-240, 241.

[4] Cameron to Franklin, June 12, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

received all the regiments agreed upon,[1] and would take no more. Rather shrewdly then, Schuyler advised that the Committee send regiments under the "original orders" as soon as possible. If objection was made after they arrived, he said, discussion could be carried on with the advantage on the side of the Committee.[2]

Sickles also proved a clever and persistent person. Franklin's suggestion for the disbanding of his organization went unheeded, probably because of the President's intercession. June 12 orders were given for the muster of his brigade, but it was not fully recruited. Fifteen days later Cameron directed that if they were not ready within three days they could not be received at all. But this was a gesture. They were not ready and they did not disband. Only three regiments were full by the middle of July; the other two were reported nearly so. The disaster at Bull Run spurred on Sickle's efforts and three regiments were immediately moved forward. The others apparently followed without full quotas for in September he requested permission to recruit them to regulation strength.[3]

As June was drawing to a close Cameron became more reluctant than ever to receive additional troops. The numbers of three-months' men and long-term volunteers were already far in excess of those called. He believed he had taken enough responsibility on his shoulders and would now wait for action by the Congress which would assemble July

[1] The present writer has found no evidence that the Committee ever sanctioned a reduction of the quota of fourteen regiments. Cameron may have been referring here to Franklin's request that the Committee content itself with four regiments. But this the Committee does not appear to have agreed to.

[2] R. H. McCurdy to Wetmore, July 2, 1861; Schuyler to Draper, July 3, 1861, Telegram Book, Union Defence Committee MSS.

[3] Cameron to Franklin, June 12 and 27, 1861; Sickles to McClellan, Sept. 9, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 267, 299, 344-345, 483, 493-494.

4. He intended to recommend to that body a large increase in the army, and thought that those three-months' men whom he now declined to receive would in a short time be the more anxious to reenlist and serve the country.[1]

Much of the trouble in New York and the similar conflicts in the other states were undoubtedly the fault of Cameron and the President. The Secretary's methods and purposes were exasperatingly devious at times; his orders and dispatches were frequently ambiguous in meaning, inadequate in information and often appeared or were contradictory to those previously issued. There was undoubtedly a good deal of suspicion abroad that political motives lurked behind many of his actions, a suspicion which only intensified the growing distrust of his words and his deeds. At the same time the President, good-naturedly, but with rather reckless disregard of official responsibility and administrative procedure, gave to men ambitious for military distinction permission to raise regiments independent of state authorities, and with little or no consideration to whatever formal plans the department and the army may have had.[2] Cameron occasionally did the same thing.[3] The result was a high

[1] Wright to Curtin, June 25, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

[2] The case of Sickles is one in point. In asking Lincoln if he approved of the petty intrigues which sought to defeat his purpose, Sickles received the reply: "I know nothing of them, General, and have only to say this, that, whatever are the obstacles thrown in your way, come to me, and I will remove them promptly. Should you stand in need of assistance to hasten the organization of your brigade, come to me again, and I will give or do whatever is required. I want your men, General, and you are the man to lead them. Go to the Secretary of War and get your instructions immediately." *New York Herald*, May 17, 1861.

[3] Cameron's action in this regard was of especial embarrassment to Governor Curtin of Pennsylvania. Several times he gave authority to favorites to recruit in competition with the governor. Once having received commissions they located in various sections of the state and recruited in leisurely fashion. On one occasion when a requisition was

degree of irritation among the governors, for the men commissioned, appearing in their respective states, began to compete with them in procuring the services of recruits for their regiments.

It was also common to make direct appeals to the President for the receipt of regiments already raised. When four German regiments organized independently in New York appealed to him on May 13 to be received as a brigade with Carl Schurz as their brigadier, Lincoln promptly asked Cameron why it should not be done at once. By the plan the President was to appoint the generals.[1] A few days later he inquired why a Philadelphia regiment was not accepted. He thought there was something strange about this and called upon the Secretary to "give these gentlemen an interview and take their regiment."[2] June 11 he ordered six Indiana regiments which had passed muster satisfactorily to be received by his own direction.[3] On the 13th he interceded for the accepting of an extra Michigan regiment presented by a Colonel Stockton, and another raised by Fletcher Webster in Massachusetts.[4] Four days later he requested that six more regiments be taken from Ohio and four from Indiana. In the latter case he added: "Probably they should come from the triangular region between the Ohio and

made upon the state for additional troops, Curtin at once declared his purpose to consolidate the various embryo regiments, appoint the officers and make them a part of the quota. This he believed he had a right to do under the state constitution and laws. When he requested the Secretary to issue an order to the recruiting colonels to consolidate under the governor's direction, Cameron promptly refused to grant it. Only a threat to carry the issue directly to the President finally induced Cameron to give in and sign an order. McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, pp. 388-390.

[1] Lincoln to Cameron, May 13, 1861, Lincoln, *Works*, vol. vi, p. 273.

[2] Lincoln to Cameron, May 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 224.

[3] Lincoln to ——, June 11, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 263.

[4] Lincoln to Cameron, June 13, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 269.

Wabash Rivers, including my own boyhood home." [1] All such irregularities only added to the already general confusion and undermined the purposes of the department and its bureaus.

That there should have been an unusual amount of political interference and influence exerted in the War Department and the other branches of the government in the spring of 1861 was, of course, inevitable. It should not be forgotten that the circumstances were peculiar and unprecedented. Never before in our national history had a new party enjoyed such opportunities for plunder. In addition to the customary peace-time patronage, ever increasing, came the tremendous political and military spoils of war. It is not surprising that the War Department should have been more crowded with seekers of privilege and favor than the rest. With a master politician as its chief, how could it have been otherwise? Where else were the chances of reward so great? Where else in the administration was there a man who knew so well the business of patronage and how to distribute it effectively?

It was a great day for Cameron! With his new-found wealth of patronage he could readily pay off his friends, punish his foes and buy up political strength. And we may be sure he made the most of his opportunities, for himself and for the party.[2] Many who failed in the first assault for political office suddenly discovered in themselves talent for military service, for the work of sutler, paymaster or any other position that promised a pecuniary return and government employment. They went in person to the department,

[1] Lincoln to Cameron, June 17, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 274.

[2] George Gibbs in a letter to McClellan, June 19, 1861, said: "Cameron is unfit for the place. Apart from a reputation of corruption, he is always 'too busy' to attend to military matters. Officers on the most important business are kept cooling their heels days after day in his lobby while the d—d politicians get every access to him." McClellan MSS.

or wrote or perhaps did both. Public officials of all grades from Cabinet officers and Senators on down to those in lowly station stormed the War Office in behalf of friends, constituents and political creditors. Even the President was not averse to interceding in having a little plunder turned in special channels.

The selection of officers for militia and volunteers in 1861 was in a large sense political.[1] The power and privilege of naming officers for both, as has been said, lay with the governors and the President. In some instances it was well exercised; in others it was not.[2] The fault was not altogether with them, however, for the opposition of General Scott and Adjutant-General Thomas to the detailing of regular army officers to the regiments of raw recruits prevented them in many cases from acquiring the services of experienced men. Indeed, so fearful was Thomas of depleting the regular army, and so inappreciative was he of the value and necessity of carefully training volunteers, that regular officers already commanding volunteer regiments and brigades were returned to their companies to serve in minor

[1] Congressional delegations usually nominated to the President the men they wished appointed as brigadiers and major-generals of volunteers. No doubt in the states party and factional interests played considerable part in the governors' selections, but to what extent is not known.

[2] In New York the military board did much of the selecting of regimental officers. The *New York Herald*, June 2, 1861, complained that the board members were engaging in a ruinous policy of appointing their own relatives to the command of regiments in spite of their total ignorance of military affairs. Ganoe says: "The governors accepted whole regiments of about 850 men practically as they had been organized at home. The men who raised, equipped and supplied a regiment or brigade really owned it, and no mere governor or president could dictate to it as to whom its officers should be or what rank should be given. If the South believed in states' rights, so did the North in the collection of its uniformed recruits. Generals commanding in the field had to apply to the proper governor before an officer of that state could be promoted." *History of the United States Army*, p. 252.

capacities.[1] The way was thus opened for selection to high command on the basis of political preference or natural leadership.

Under such circumstances the clamor for commissions and rank was to be expected, and some unfortunate appointments were almost inevitable. Certainly nothing but personal boldness and politics can account for the selection of Benjamin F. Butler to be a brigadier-general of militia in the spring of 1861.[2] Nor did the President show better judgment when he appointed the same gentleman to be a major-general of volunteers a short time afterward. Butler had no real military training nor experience. Nor were Nathaniel P. Banks, Edward D. Baker, John A. Logan, James S. Wadsworth, Francis P. Blair, Jr. and others distinguished for their military knowledge. The appointment of John C. Frémont to be a major-general of the regular army was a no less unfortunate selection, as his work and conduct in the Department of Missouri amply proved.[3] It is rather paradoxical that these men should have held high rank, while Grant who was a graduate of West Point and had served fifteen years in the regular army and felt competent to command a regiment, did not even receive the favor of a reply when he tendered his services in May.[4] Stanton

[1] Upton, *Military Policy*, p. 235; Cox, *Military Reminiscence*, p. 171.

[2] Upon learning that a call had been made upon Massachusetts on April 16 for troops, Butler immediately wired to Senator Wilson saying: "See Cameron and have a brigadier asked for, and I will see to it that I am detailed." Butler to Schouler, July 10, 1870, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 12.

[3] Ropes, John C., *The Story of the Civil War*, vol. i, pp. 112-113; *vide*, pp. 269-278.

[4] Grant to Thomas, May 24, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 234; Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 239-240. William T. Sherman in April was offered a brigadier-generalship of militia by Francis P. Blair, Jr., who claimed to hold the power of giving it. Sherman declined but in May accepted a colonelcy of regular infantry. Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 171-172.

was probably not so far from the truth when in June he declared that with a few exceptions, the army appointments appeared "to be bestowed on persons whose only claim is their Republicanism—broken-down politicians without experience, ability, or any other merit." [1]

How much pressure and influence Cameron exerted upon the President in the selection of field officers is not revealed, but it is reasonable to presume it was considerable.[2] In the distribution of paymasterships, sutlerships and similar positions, however, he appears to have been ever busy and always attentive. The first paymaster whom Cameron appointed in the regular army after its enlargement was a Pennsylvanian who had performed faithful services for him in his Senate race of 1857.[3] It was a life-time position and consequently a place to be coveted. In June through a general order he had the existing regulations changed so that the appointment of all sutlers was placed in his own hands,[4] a splendid opportunity for one interested in patronage.

In addition to rank and office there also came in the wake of war enormous patronage in the awarding of contracts for food, supplies, horses, wagons, vessels, clothing, blankets, arms and dozens of other articles for army use. Nothing was overlooked by ambitious scheming men. No favor was too small to be of value and none was without its seeker.

[1] Stanton to Dix, June 11, 1861, quoted in Flower, Frank A., *Edwin McMaster Stanton*, p. 111.

[2] Cameron appears to have been responsible for keeping General E. A. Hitchcock out of service in 1861. Scott nominated him to the President as the "ablest military officer out of service," but the Secretary was strongly opposed to him because Hitchcock had exposed his speculations when agent in settling the Winnebago Indian claims. T. B. Van Antwerp to Trumbull, Mar. 21, 1862, Trumbull MSS.; Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field* (Croffut, W. A., ed.), p. 432 and footnote.

[3] McClure, *Old Time Notes*, vol. i, p. 271.

[4] General Order No. 38, *O. R.*, vol. iii, ser. i, p. 299.

Congressmen were never more solicitous of their constituents, nor were they often permitted to forget them. The mails were filled with appeals to use their influence;[1] their offices were well populated with contractors who had come in person to get their assistance. Then the rounds of the departments and bureaus would be made. Senator Orville Browning, just appointed to the seat made vacant by the death of Stephen A. Douglas, was quick to "catch on" and enter into these performances as the careful notations in his diary amply indicate.[2] Nor was the President too busy to forget old friends. He was always pleased when they received contracts "on fair and just terms to the Government and to themselves."[3]

While all these things were sauce for the politicians and the recipients, they were often an impediment to proper administration and an effective prosecution of the war. Too much time was required in dealing with these matters and too many persons were interfering in the work of the War Department and cluttering up its offices. There seemed to be a feeling that each official must look out for his own friends regardless of the consequences to the department. Governors pressed Congressmen into service or sent special emissaries to implore the Secretary to accept more regiments or send more arms. Cabinet members spent much of their time in the War Office and bureaus assisting and interfering. Montgomery Blair's testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War discloses his own activities in behalf of Frémont. He said:

[1] The present writer examined in the Library of Congress the papers of many of the important men in public life at that time. The number of appeals for favors of all kinds is amazing. The War Department files also show that a great many were made directly to Cameron and the bureau chiefs.

[2] *Vide*, pp. 221-222, footnotes.

[3] Lincoln to McClellan, June 10, 1861, McClellan MSS.

In urging him to go to Missouri at once, I told him I would attend to everything for him here, and from my great familiarity with the bureaus and departments, I thought I could do better for him than he could do for himself. I kept this promise, I spent the greater part of my time, from the date of his appointment till September in forwarding his wishes in that respect. I did not succeed always to my satisfaction, but my whole heart was in the work, so much so that I scolded and growled, as General Cameron called it, unreasonably at delays and obstacles.[1]

With the possible exception of the President, no two men were more persistently active in the War Department's affairs than the Secretaries of State and the Treasury. Each had already gotten a foothold and was exerting a good deal of influence. Chase was in a large measure justified since finances were in the very nature of things closely allied with the preparation for and the prosecution of the war, but his doings were of a far wider scope than that. There was less excuse for Seward's interference, but his opportunities were undoubtedly greater since his own department was less affected by the war, leaving him considerable freedom for other work, and because he had been in close affiliation with Cameron at the outset. He seemed to be constantly on the run. "I am counseling with the Cabinet one hour, with the Army officers the next, the Navy the next," he wrote, "and I visit all troops as fast as they come."[2] Seeming to look upon the War Department as a mere appendage of his own, he freely issued orders, projected and sent out expeditions and did many extraordinary things which, if done at all, should have been done by the Secretary of War.[3]

[1] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, p. 155.

[2] Quoted in Bancroft, *Seward*, vol. ii, p. 352.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 351-352; Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, pp. 38-39; Narrative of Events, MS.

Seward's bold assumptions in the department were not altogether pleasing to Cameron, and he sometimes complained of the New Yorker's interference in the office and with army matters. Cameron was not without pride and aspirations and he did not wish to, nor did his friends care to see him, act in a position secondary to the Secretary of State. But Seward and his cohorts sought to strengthen the impression that this was the case, and it gained credence in the public mind. Perhaps as a result of this, after a few months had passed the intimacy between the two began to give way to a growing friendship between Cameron and Chase.[1] Chase was much less obnoxious in his interference, and Cameron soon found that on the important questions arising over the negroes his own views were very much more nearly akin to those of the Secretary of the Treasury than they were to those of the Secretary of State.

[1] Bancroft, *Seward*, vol. ii, pp. 351-352; Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, pp. 38-39; Narrative of Events, MS.

CHAPTER V

Forward to Richmond

While the work of recruiting and organizing the raw levies which had poured out in answer to the President's calls went lumbering on in a confused, hap-hazard fashion, the aged general-in-chief, Scott, was contemplating and developing his plan of campaign. From the outset of war the administration had placed its faith and confidence in him, and surely there was no one in the land more ripened in experience, more learned in military affairs than he. A round half-century and more of his time and thought and energies had been spent in the army. But with all of this, the immediate problems presented aspects almost as wholly new to him as to the unenlightened President and Secretary of War. His long career had been confined, in the main, to the handling of regulars, and with only small bodies of these. He was accustomed to relying upon seasoned veterans as the "iron column" with volunteers, if used at all, as an auxiliary or sustaining force. Now, however, there must be a new order of things: the volunteers must constitute the main reliance of the government.[1]

To Scott it was obvious that time and patience would be needed to make an army out of what was plainly an undisciplined, unlearned conglomeration of citizen soldiery. Months would be required to whip these volunteers into

[1] Stanton to Buchanan, May 16, 1861, Buchanan, *Works*, vol. xi, p. 191; Unsigned letter to J. Sherman, June 20, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, pp. 710-711; Seward, *Seward at Washington*, vol. i, p. 566; Ropes, *Story of the Civil War*, vol. i, p. 114.

shape for battle. The best that could be hoped for was a fall campaign. Then there could be a comprehensive movement. The three-months' militia, he looked upon as a stop-gap only, a defense body which could do nothing more than protect the capital city and other strategic points while the volunteers were being transformed into seasoned soldiers. That was all. A decisive campaign with them was out of the question.[1] Futhermore, the general must have realized full well that the War Office and its bureaus were in no condition in those early days to give the effective assistance and support that such a campaign would require.

Scott's carefully matured plan, derisively called at the time "Scott's Anaconda," provided for a grand enveloping of the Confederacy: first, a complete and effective blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf ports, then "a powerful movement down the Mississippi to the ocean with a cordon of posts at proper points, and the capture of Forts Jackson and St. Philip," and finally the occupation and retention of New Orleans until "the present difficulties are composed." The army was to be made up of the best regulars and three-year volunteers. Four and a half months of instruction would be required. November 10 he suggested as the possible date for the advance to begin.[2] Here was the program of a veteran strategist and campaigner.

But Scott's plan was only one of a number, and perhaps the least popular because it frankly called for delay. Before April had closed, Lincoln in a "pleasant, hopeful mood" had outlined a tentative, superficial plan to blockade the coast, protect Washington, hold Fort Monroe and then "go down

[1] Scott to McClellan, May 21, 1861, McClellan MSS. Welles says that Scott "deprecated hasty action, and apprehended disaster from victory in the first great encounter almost as much as defeat. There could be nothing decisive, he said, in an encounter of unorganized masses of men, besides he was opposed to a Virginia war." Narrative, MS.

[2] Scott to McClellan, May 3 and 21, 1861, McClellan MSS.

to Charleston and pay her a little debt we are owing there." [1] Cameron, too, was ready with a program, large and fantastic, which he proposed at the very first war council, April 14. He believed the old British plan for subduing the colonies was quite applicable to the present situation, and with modifications and enlargements could be used. In brief, he would first secure Washington and the route to it from the base of supplies, strengthen the few forts still retained in the South, recover and rebuild Sumter " which we must do, or admit we are not a Government," seize Charleston and New Orleans and hermetically seal up the Confederate states and any border states which joined them. Having done all this, he would make no further invasion but let the seceders " lash themselves to pieces in their own fury." Lincoln considered this program gigantic; others in the Cabinet thought it impracticable and unwise. Seward believed it impossible to acquire the means for its accomplishment, and worse still, it would exasperate the South beyond reconciliation.[1]

Still another ill-matured plan of operations came from the West. A conference of western governors meeting in Cleveland in the opening days of May felt there was especial danger in their section. They suggested that now that the capital was safe, attention should be directed to the country immediately contiguous to the line between the free and slave states. The border was almost defenseless. The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers must be kept open for legitimate business and closed to all supplies, arms and ammunition for the South. The West would rally 160,000 men in a few weeks for the work but they needed equipment, a better military

[1] Hay MSS., cited in Stephenson, Nathaniel W., *Lincoln*, p. 170.

[2] Gilmore, *Personal Recollections*, pp. 25-27. Cameron informed Gilmore and Robert J. Walker after the war council on April 14 as to what had taken place. Gilmore had the day previous suggested the British plan to the Secretary.

organization and a military head. The government must act quickly and effectively to help them.[1] No doubt, General McClellan, a rising star on the military horizon, who was present at the conference was in part responsible for the bringing forth of these views. They were in harmony with a plan which he had already hurriedly formulated and submitted to General Scott,[2] a program which if adhered to would probably have placed himself at the head of a large invading column.

It was easy to plan when little reckoning was given to the means of carrying into execution. Men there were in superabundance, but there was little else. No one relying upon the War Office seemed to be getting the amount of assistance required. McClellan was complaining before the Western Virginia campaign began that the War Department was sending to him competent assistants but they had neither funds nor authority. He feared Ohio's military organization would be seriously retarded as a result.[3] Governor Yates objected that his troops were armed with old altered muskets which were unfit for service. He wanted at least 10,000 stand of the best arms at once.[4] John S. Carlisle protested to Lincoln against the neglect of the loyal people in the border slave states. He had written to Cameron time and again. He had endeavored to see him, but could never find the Secretary with a moment's leisure. Loyal volunteers raised in these states were lying out without blankets, tents, camp equipment, arms or ammunition and had been for weeks and

[1] Randall to Lincoln, May 6, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 167-170; *Memoir of Koerner*, vol. ii, pp. 139-140; Bigelow, John, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. i, pp. 349-351.

[2] McClellan to Scott, Apr. 26, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[3] McClellan to Townsend, May 21, 1861; McClellan to Dennison, June 1, 1861 (private), McClellan Letter Book, MSS.

[4] Yates to Cameron, June 21, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 285.

weeks. Unless supplies were granted soon they would have to quit the contest.[1]

The troops arriving in Washington in May and June were frequently a sorry sight and were subjected to conditions which clearly indicated that the War Department and its bureaus were not up to the task before them. The journey thither was often made in cattle cars, crowded and as ill-provided as though they were carrying beasts to the shambles. Facilities were lacking for those ill or exhausted from exposure and upon debarkation they found no provision for their reception. Men stood for hours in sun or rain, waiting for rations and shelter while ignorant staff officers learned what they should do. When at last quarters were obtained, the troops sought to appease their hunger with poor, distasteful food, and to regain strength and energy while lying upon rotten straw, wrapped in shoddy blankets.[2] It was indeed difficult under such circumstances to keep up among the soldiers an enthusiasm for the cause and still harder to work up an *esprit de corps* among them.

One of the advantages of General Scott's plan was that the delay in starting the campaign would have given the War Department a much needed opportunity better to organize its bureaus to meet these shortages and overcome deficiencies, and also to acquire a surplus of supplies, arms and munitions. Transportation facilities could have been

[1] Carlisle to Lincoln, July 8, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 323.

Experience had taught Andrew of Massachusetts that waiting for the department to act in furnishing supplies was a slow, unsatisfactory business; he had learned to take the initiative himself in contracting. Consequently when Lincoln in June authorized ten additional regiments from Massachusetts, Andrew asked only for an official requisition from Cameron for them. This would justify the governor in making contracts. No sooner was it received than the work of equipping was set on foot and Andrew reported the regiments would be fully ready in forty days. Andrew to Cameron, June 20 and 21, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 282, 286.

[2] Stillé, *Sanitary Commission*, p. 23.

put in better shape for a forward movement and a satisfactory system for distributing food, equipment and arms devised.

The general very wisely brushed aside quickly all the immature suggestions in favor of his own comprehensive scheme of seasoning and training. But it was very soon manifest that he himself did not possess the strength and vitality necessary for a vigorous prosecution of the war, nor was he able to cast off readily old ideas to meet many of the new and practical problems arising. As indicated, he clung to the old way of keeping the small regular army intact instead of utilizing its experienced personnel in the development of the new national army. And as of old, he intended to use it as the "iron column" of advance. Furthermore, instead of brigading the volunteer regiments as they arrived at the front, so that the fundamentals of military life might be acquired and a much needed opportunity given for officers and men to learn how large contingents should be handled in manoeuvres and battle formation, they were permitted to remain detached and poorly organized.[1] Count Gurowski, familiar with European procedure, could not understand this. In May he confided to his diary: "Weeks run, troops increase, and not the first step made to organize them into an army, to form brigades, not to say divisions, not yet two regiments manoeuvring together. What a strange idea the military chief or chiefs, or department, or somebody must have what it is to organize an army. . . ."[2] General McDowell, sensing the laxity of organization, appealed to his superior early in June to concentrate the troops into field brigades, but without success.[3] The natural result was that

[1] Ropes, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-115; Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 179; Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, p. 17.

[2] Gurowski, *Diary*, vol i, p. 41.

[3] McDowell to Townsend, June 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 664; Mahan, A., *Critical History of the Late American War*, p. 31; McDowell's testimony, *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part ii, p. 38.

the indifferently commanded recruits remained an undisciplined, unruly aggregation, careless in habits, and none too eager to take orders from officers who knew little more of military science than themselves, and who too often set them a rather poor example of soldierly behavior.[1]

Montgomery Blair, the only member of the Cabinet who had any military knowledge, despaired of effective action so long as Scott was in control. He persistently advised Cameron to take matters into his own hands since he must bear the responsibility.[2] But he certainly ought to have known that that would have helped little since the Secretary and his department were already in a bedlam of confusion, and were constantly falling short of the demands made upon them. Perhaps Blair presumed that once the control was wrested from Scott pressure could be exerted to have it delegated to a younger man of greater energy and resourcefulness. He had recently been active in urging the selection of Meigs for quartermaster-general, and was at least partly responsible for the assignment of Frémont to high command in the West a few days later. Blair was following closely the whole military situation and his views, freely-aired, were much respected even if not accepted. The old general, however, was too firmly entrenched to be easily shelved, even though his program was about to be disrupted.

The great obstacle to his plan was the impatience of the northern people and Scott from the outset foresaw it. He realized they would want instant and vigorous action, that they would object to the slow process of instruction in twelve or fifteen camps, and the waiting for the rise of the rivers and the return of frost to kill the virus of malignant fevers

[1] Russell, William, *My Diary, North and South*, pp. 403-404; Stillé, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Ganoe, *History of the United States Army*, pp. 253-255.

[2] Blair to Cameron, June 22, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 155.

below Memphis.[1] But he probably did not anticipate that the objection would become as universal and formidable as it actually did.

Doubtless, Cameron's circular letter to the governors on May 24, telling them that some of their regiments would not be called into action "much before frost," thus giving them "ample time to acquire discipline, habits of obedience and tactical instructions,"[2] fell like a bomb-shell among many of these belligerent men. It was not time they wanted, it was action and plenty of it. They were for war, "instant and terrible!" They wished to go forward while Union enthusiasm was at its zenith and their troops were eager for the smell of battle.

Sober judgment had been cast to the winds; popular clamor was at the fore! Galusha Grow, soon to become Speaker of the House of Representatives, on May 5 had informed Cameron that a rumor to the effect that it was not intended to invade Virginia had made the northern people "perfectly indignant", and that if troops were not marched into Virginia, a universal execration would rise in the North and in thirty days the administration would be as powerless as it was then powerful.[3] Governor Randall of Wisconsin, just home from the conference of governors at Cleveland, wrote to Lincoln that "there is a spirit evoked by this rebellion among liberty loving people of this country that is

[1] Scott to McClellan, May 3, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[2] Cameron to the governors, May 24, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 230. On this same day the governors of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois united in a testimonial requesting that a campaign be entered upon immediately for the armed occupation of Kentucky and its leading communications with the South, and that a large force and more authority be given to McClellan for the purpose. Scott opposed this. Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 305-306.

[3] Grow to Cameron, May 5, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 160.

driving them to action, and if the Government will not permit them to act for it, they will act for themselves." [1]

So began in early May the rumblings for "blood and thunder", rumblings which grew in volume and intensity as the days went by until in late June they had become an indomitable, deafening roar. The ignorant would rush boldly in where the grizzled old warrior was slow to tread.

A series of successful skirmishes in western Virginia beginning early in June probably whetted the public appetite still more for a strong, direct movement, particularly against the Confederate forces gathering in eastern Virginia. This region was of greater importance, and if one sound thrashing were administered to the enemy there, all might be over. A ninety-days war had a firm grip on the popular mind, and as two of the three months' period of the militia passed, the feeling intensified that these men should be given a chance to feel the enemy before they went home. It was a privilege due them; a victory would thrill the North, perhaps discourage the South and certainly would make a good impression abroad.[2]

This general restlessness for action coming along with a widespread dissatisfaction of the administration of the War Department and a general distrust of the Secretary could easily result in embarrassment to the President when Congress convened. It was plainly discernible that many members of Congress who were arriving in Washington in advance of the July special session, came saturated with the same impatience and impulse that pervaded their constituencies. And no group in the capital proved more unreasonable or exacting in the demand for an early forward move-

[1] Randall to Lincoln, May 6, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

[2] Welles, Narrative, MS.; Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. iii, pp. 324, 329-330; Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 304, 307, 321-322.

ment. No doubt all this caused Lincoln and his advisers to do some deep thinking.[1]

Aside from questions of popular clamor and political expediency, there were some reasons which helped to make an advance look like a practical step. The June elections in Maryland and in Lincoln's beloved Kentucky registered a gratifying support and adherence to the Union; Missouri through the work of Francis P. Blair, Jr. and General Lyon, was being drawn steadily to the same position, and of Delaware there never had been serious fears of secession.[2] As a consequence, there was really less need now of caution and solicitude for the border states and more encouragement for speedy action.

Reflection soon brought the Cabinet and President into accord with the popular desire. June 25 a council of war was held. In addition to Lincoln and the Cabinet, Generals Scott, Mansfield and Meigs were present. Generals Dix and McDowell seem to have been expected to attend but did not.[3] One would like to know what took place at this meeting but nothing is disclosed. It is probable, though, that a forward movement was considered.

June 26, the next day, Greeley's *New York Tribune* sounded the tocsin for an advance:

> *Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond! The Rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on the 20th of July,* BY THAT DATE THE PLACE MUST BE HELD BY THE NATIONAL ARMY.

[1] Welles, *op. cit.* Thurlow Weed's newspaper, the *Albany Evening Journal* on July 26, 1861 stated that Lincoln and the Cabinet feared opposition and censure from Congress if action was not taken and indicated it was instrumental in causing them and Scott to yield to a forward movement. Cited in *New York Herald*, Aug. 1, 1861.

[2] Rhodes, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-281.

[3] Meigs, Diary, 1861, MS.

In the issues of succeeding days came the same bold, screaming lines. If there had been any hesitancy or doubt remaining in the minds of the President and Cabinet, Greeley put an end to it. At a crucial moment he had seized the leadership in popular clamor. His ringing appeal swept over the country. Combined public and political pressure were irresistible.

June 27 Cameron bestirred himself, took steps to regain Tennessee for the Union, and tighten the federal hold on southeastern Kentucky. Orders were given to raise 10,000 men in Tennessee for service in the eastern part of the state; in addition, one regiment was to be raised in the western part. The Ordnance Bureau was asked to furnish sufficient arms, accoutrements and ammunition, and the whole state was added to the military district of Kentucky. At the same time direction was given for the recruiting of four regiments in eastern Kentucky. On June 29 the President endorsed the orders.[1]

That same day a second council of war was held. The President, the entire Cabinet, Generals Scott, Mansfield, McDowell, Meigs, Frémont, Sandford and others were present. "Forward toward Richmond" was up for consideration. A large Confederate force was at Manassas Junction, thirty-five miles away. Scott opposed "a little war by piecemeal," and adhered to his "Anaconda." But the President, now determined in favor of a movement, overruled him and McDowell was asked to present a plan which he had matured for a march on the enemy. Scott had already approved of it from the tactical point of view. Among the other military men there was a reluctance to give their opinions as to its feasibility. Mansfield felt slighted and hurt that McDowell, a younger man, should be favored over himself for command,

[1] Cameron to Scott, June 27, 1861 and Lincoln's endorsement, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 299-300.

but forbore giving utterance to his feelings. Nor did any of the Cabinet except Blair take part in the discussion which was rather stiff, formal and constrained. In the end, the McDowell program was adopted, a movement was scheduled to begin July 8, and orders given to Meigs to have transportation ready.[1]

It was a precarious piece of business which had been resolved upon. The best efforts of the department and the army men were not sufficient to get the columns moving on the appointed day. War on a large scale was unknown in America. No officer of the army had ever led 30,000 men into battle before. There was much to be learned, and little or no time in which to learn it. The need of experienced regimental officers to handle the unseasoned militia was great. McClellan then in his brief western Virginia campaign was strongly impressed with this and appealed to Chase and Assistant Adjutant-General Townsend for general and staff officers "who understand their profession."[2] With McDowell's larger force, the need was more urgent still. Without them difficulty, confusion and delay were inevitable.[3]

Every day of delay, however, called forth the wrath of the hot-headed politicians. July 11 Trumbull in a Senatorial caucus tried to press through a resolution directing an immediate movement of troops and the occupation of Richmond before July 20.[4] Indeed it was reported that such a resolu-

[1] Welles, Narrative, MS.; Meigs, *op. cit.*; Browning, Diary, MS.; McDowell's testimony, *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part ii, p. 36.

[2] McClellan to Chase, June 26, 1861; McClellan to Townsend, July 19, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[3] Senator Trumbull, an eye witness, believed the disaster at Bull Run was due to a lack of proper officers. *Memoirs of Koerner*, vol. ii, pp. 162-163. Swinton says: "The fault lay in the inherently vicious organization of the force—in the great number of miserable subordinate officers, which in turn was the natural result of the method of raising regiments." *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, p. 58.

[4] Browning, *op. cit.*

tion backed by a group of about fifteen Senators had been offered at every caucus since Congress met. The President was told plainly that unless action was taken promptly it would be forced through.[1]

July 16 the advance finally began. General Sherman afterwards said that it "demonstrated little save the general laxity of discipline."[2] Troops frequently stopped along the road to pick blackberries or to get water; they broke ranks regardless of orders, and soon proved themselves unaccustomed to long marches. Preparations were far from complete. McDowell started with barely enough wagons for his ammunition and hospital stores. Tents, baggage and rations had to follow afterward.[3]

Sunday morning, the 21st, the federal army composed of 1600 regulars and the rest, for the most part three-months' militia, took the field and engaged at Bull Run in one of the worst fought battles of the war. There was no want of dogged tenacity or bravery among them during the thick of a continuous four-hour contest, but at a crucial time in the afternoon lax organization and a want of discipline told among the raw recruits. Officers and their men became separated; in the confusion federal troops fired upon one another and ere long the strength of McDowell's command gave way. The arrival of some fresh Confederate troops then threw the tired, foot-weary and hungry Union regiments into a panic. The battle which many had hoped would be a vital blow to the Confederacy degenerated into an unauthorized, disorderly retreat of the northern army toward

[1] *New York Herald*, July 27, 1861. The *Herald* of July 31 gives the names of fifteen Senators.

[2] Sherman, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 181.

[3] Report of McDowell, Aug. 4, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 324; McDowell's testimony, *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part ii, pp. 38-39.

Washington, some of the zouaves not stopping until they were safely lodged in New York City.[1]

Dilatoriness, inadequate equipment, inexperience and incapacity had done their work. At no time was the amount of transportation facilities available adequate for the occasion. Meigs and his Quartermaster Bureau had exerted themselves to the utmost with the poor means which they had, but the inexperience of the general agent of transportation, John Tucker, and the probable shortage of suitable wagons in the northern market were severe handicaps. The lack of conveyance, in addition to other circumstances, retarded the advance so long that the terms of the militiamen expired by the time they arrived at the front, and it was only with great difficulty that most of them, grown weary and disgusted, could be prevailed upon to remain a few days more. The subsistence corps, likewise suffering from an inexperienced personnel, worthless teamsters, " green " teams and a shortage of wagons, was slow in bringing up food supplies which only served to aggravate the situation and irritate the troops.[2]

The failure to organize regiments into field brigades at an early day also told when the army moved southward and engaged the enemy. When they were finally formed in preparation for battle, inexperience among officers and men made brigades unwieldy and slow. So much time was lost in getting them into position on the day of the battle that

[1] Reports of McDowell, July 21, 22 and Aug. 4, 1861, *O. R., op. cit.*, pp. 316, 317-325; Report of General Tyler, July 27, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 348-351; Report of Colonel Sherman, July 25, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 368-370; Report of General Heintzelman, July 31, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 403-404; Report of Beauregard, Aug. —, Aug. 26 (Oct. 14), 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 440-447, 484-504; Report of Johnston, Oct. 14, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 470-478.

[2] Report of McDowell, Aug. 4, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 324-325; Report of H. F. Clarke, Aug. 2, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 336; Report of Lieut. G. Bell, Aug. 1, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 338; Report of Lieut. J. Curtis, Aug. 1, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 341; Report of Lieut. J. P. Hawkins, Aug. 2, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 343.

much of the strategy devised by McDowell was vitiated and its tactical advantage destroyed.[1] The enemy was ready and waiting.

In spite of all the adverse circumstances which hedged about McDowell, good fortune would probably have crowned his efforts with success that hot July day had there not been trouble from an unexpected source. In submitting his plan of campaign he had made it distinctly understood that General Joseph E. Johnston, then in the Shenandoah Valley with 12,000 men should not be permitted to join Beauregard's force at Manassas. Against this Scott had assured him, saying that if Johnston did attempt it he would have Patterson's force, then 22,000, at his heels.[2] But in this the old chief had misjudged his man.

Patterson, then 69 years of age, was a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. Scott looked upon him as a "good second in command," but he soon proved to be a timid, complaining, over-cautious old man. He was prone to over-estimate the strength of his opponent and quick to under-rate his own power. It had been expected that he would attack and defeat Johnston about the middle of July, but he hesitated, dallied along and magnified in his own mind the enemy force from 12,000 to about 35,000.[3] The delay was fatal. Suddenly on July 17, he reversed his plan and instead of falling upon the Confederates, withdrew to Charlestown, widening the distance to twenty-two miles between himself and Johnston whom he had been warned to hold from Beauregard. Johnston immediately seized upon

[1] Report of McDowell, July 22, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 318-319; Report of Major J. G. Barnard, July 29, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

[2] McDowell's testimony, *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part ii, pp. 36-39, 41-42.

[3] Reports and dispatches of Patterson and Scott, July 9-20, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 162-172, *passim.*

the advantage given him and was soon on his way to Manassas wholly unmolested.[1] It was the appearance of some of these troops which brought on the Unionist rout at Bull Run.

The misfortunes which dogged the steps of McDowell were chronic and preyed upon those of Patterson as well, a shortage of food supplies, inadequate transportation, expiration of militia terms, and in addition, a want of clothing, accoutrements and arms. The lack of them had in some measure justified part of his inactivity, but when combined with personal lethargy, they made him well nigh useless. By the time he learned that Johnston had eluded him he was utterly unable to act. The only troops under his command then fit and available for service were six regiments of infantry, three of cavalry and one battery. All the rest were barefooted. Five regiments had already gone home, four were about to leave and others would follow in a few days at the expiration of their terms.[2]

The Bull Run campaign was the first great military harvest of the long season of neglect and unpreparedness. The shortcomings encountered can properly be traced back to the heedlessness of the old policies. Had a standing army of 30,000 men, one for every thousand inhabitants, been in existence in 1861, an aggregation of three-months' militia need not have faced the Confederates in eastern Virginia under such unfavorable circumstances. Had the War Department been properly equipped, manned and managed there need not have been the confusion, delay and shortages which attended nearly every administrative movement.

[1] Report of Patterson, July 18, 20 and 21, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 169, 172; Report of Johnston, Oct. 14, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 473.

[2] Reports of Patterson, July 9-20, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 162-172, *passim;* Patterson's testimony, *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part ii, p. 78 *et seq.*

CHAPTER VI

Reorganization

The fall of Sumter filled the northern people with righteous indignation and stirred them with enthusiasm for the preservation of the Union. The disaster of Bull Run sobered them with the realization that the South was in dead earnest and that the war would be long and bloody. There was no panic among the citizenry as a result of the rout. There was only a grim rededication to the task of coercing the seceded states into their proper places, to maintain the Union. With them for this purpose the Executive and Legislative joined hands.[1]

Bull Run had demonstrated that the crude experimentalism under which the war had thus far been conducted would not bring about the desired restoration, that campaigns precipitated by rash politicians, sanguine journalists and public clamor and fought by poorly organized, ill-equipped and undisciplined three-months' militia could not bring victory. War on a grand scale could not be managed from the seclusion of a Washington office, even though the veteran Scott might be its occupant. Nor could an under-manned, under-supplied War Department properly support and sustain armies in the field. Every shortage of muskets, clothing, shoes, food and transportation in the Bull Run campaign was an indictment of the War Office, its bureaus and the policies which had made them what they were. A heavy blow had been struck at the existing order of things. It was time for a reorganization, for a fresh beginning.

[1] Burgess, John W., *The Civil War and the Constitution*, vol. i, pp. 226-227, 230; Ropes, *Story of the Civil War*, vol. i, pp. 162-163.

July 22, the day after the battle, was a day full of purpose and augured well for the future. The tide of retreat had been stemmed at the Potomac. Cameron wired to New York that "Our works on the south bank of the Potomac are impregnable, being well manned with reinforcements. The capital is safe." [1] All through that day and on the succeeding ones he and his new chief clerk, James Lesley, Jr., kept the wires hot accepting new offers of regiments and ordering forward those already organized.[2] There was none of the "cooling the ardor" so conspicuous a few days before. Cameron now took all that came. The Pennsylvania Reserves rejected in May were gratefully received in July. Sickles who had received neither supplies, clothing nor pay up until this time, had only to say the word on the 22nd, and at once the Secretary let him know that quartermaster supplies would be forthcoming.[3]

Senators and Representatives who had galloped off on horses and in carriages the day before, lunch in hand, to witness the collapse of the Confederacy and had returned in undignified haste, now were in their proper places to join with their colleagues in giving the President and War Department unstinted support in an enlarged and aggravated conflict. The ninety-day war idea was completly gone.

Lincoln, who had spent a sleepless night after Bull Run, quietly listened while excited men talked themselves out on what they knew of the rout, and revolving in his mind a program, was ready on the morning of the 22nd, for a fresh start. He gave his approval to a bill authorizing the acceptance of 500,000 three-year volunteers and put new hope into

[1] Cameron to Grinnell, Draper and Hamilton, July 22, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 756.

[2] *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 341 *et seq.*

[3] Sickles to Cameron, Cameron to Sickles, July 22, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 342.

the crest-fallen army by calling General McClellan to Washington to take active command.[1]

The task to which this young general was called was a great and impressive one. It might well have made him hesitate, but at this moment he enjoyed the full confidence of the administration and could expect substantial backing. "I find myself in a new and strange position here," he wrote, "Presdt. Cabinet, Genl Scott and all deferring to me — by some strange operation of magic I seem to have become *the* power in the land. I almost think that were I to win some small success now I could become Dictator or anything else that might please me."[2]

McClellan's first problem was to bring order out of chaos in the army in and around Washington. It was a "mere collection of regiments cowering on the banks of the Potomac, some perfectly raw, others dispirited by their recent defeat;" they were not even in a military position. In spite of Cameron's calming assurance of July 22 as to the impregnability of the city, McClellan later wrote that it could have been taken by a dash of a regiment of cavalry.[3] Desertions were numerous, streets and hotels were crowded with straggling officers and wayward men, absent without authority from their proper stations. To remedy this McClellan immediately issued orders forbidding officers and men to loaf about and directed them to devote themselves to "appropriate duties with their respective commands." A stringent system of military police was then adopted and an improvement in the morale of the troops speedily appeared.[4] By August 2

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 368-369; General Order No. 49, Aug. 3, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 380; Thomas to McClellan, July 22, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 753.

[2] McClellan to his wife, July 27, 1861, McClellan Letter Book, MSS.

[3] McClellan to Stanton, Jan. 31, 1862, McClellan MSS.

[4] Swinton, *Army of the Potomac*, pp. 62-63; General Order No. 2, July 30, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 769.

McClellan was able to report to his wife that he had Washington "perfectly quiet now—you would not know there was a regiment here." [1]

Having restored order, he next set out to reorganize the army, grouping brigades into larger division units. Adequate artillery and engineering establishments were provided for and the cavalry army developed. Especial attention was given to the quartermaster, ordnance, commissary and medical staffs, since these had been notably deficient and unserviceable at Bull Run.[2] In this McClellan was measurably assisted by an act of Congress, August 3, which increased the personnel of the staff departments to proportions more nearly commensurate with the enlarged army.[3] In all his efforts he appears to have had the cordial and full support of the President and Secretary of War.

Another problem calling for immediate attention was the proper officering of the new army, particularly regimental officers. No single defect had stood out more clearly in the movements made thus far than the absence of officers who understood their business. A step in the direction of improvement was taken when the President on July 22 approved the bill providing for the enlargement of the army. In it there was a section authorizing generals commanding separate departments or detached contingents to appoint military boards to inquire into the capacity, qualifications, efficiency and propriety of conduct of their volunteer officers.[4] Two days later, however, the Secretary took matters into his own hands and began issuing warnings to colonels telling them that the commissions of their regiments would be

[1] McClellan to his wife, Aug. 2, 1861, McClellan Letter Book, MSS.

[2] Swinton, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-66; McClellan to Cameron, Sept. 8, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[3] General Order No. 54, Aug. 10, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 396-398.

[4] General Order No. 49, Aug. 3, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 382-383.

revoked if they proved incompetent. July 25 a general order was promulgated to the effect that all regimental officers would be examined by a board to be appointed by the War Department with the concurrence of the general-in-chief.[1] It was evident that Cameron was determined not to let control in this matter slip out of his own office. Friction arose at once and the selection of examiners was delayed. It was alleged that the politicians were clamoring to have Cameron do the selecting, thus insuring through discreet appointees the retention of their particular and incompetent friends, but the military men objected, contending that the choice of the board should rest with the military leaders who were responsible for the future movements.[2] Cameron appears to have won at least a partial victory in the dispute for the rejections made by the board when chosen were not always final. It sometimes happened that orders were given by the War Office for the reinstatement of men whom the examiners had ousted,[3] but on the whole it is probable that much good resulted.

While the contest was going on to determine who should name the examining board, another was centering on the old question as to whether the young regular officers should be allowed to transfer to volunteer regiments. Bull Run had amply demonstrated that it ought to be done, and the volunteers themselves wanted it done. Congress compromised on the issue and in an act of July 29 organizing new regiments authorized the general-in-chief, at his discretion, to detail regular officers to the new organizations.[4] But since both

[1] Military Book No 45, MSS.; General Order No. 47, July 25, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 349; *New York Herald*, July 25, 1861.

[2] *Ibid.*, Aug. 1, 1861.

[3] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part i, pp. 169-170.

[4] Upton, *Military Policy*, pp. 235-236; General Order No. 48, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 374.

Scott and Cameron were opposed to such transfers, the optional provision was of no immediate value. Attempts by Governor Andrew to have a regular officer assigned to a Massachusetts regiment for which he had no competent colonel met only with rebuffs from both men and the adjutant-general as well. When an appeal was made by Andrew to McClellan, however, the general informed the department that he knew of no better way to employ regular officers than to assign them to command divisions, brigades and regiments of new troops "particularly when it is remembered that we have almost none of the old troops at our disposal." [1] Also Frémont was for a time unsuccessful in his desires to have certain regulars retained. August 25 he sought the aid of Montgomery Blair, and the latter then recommended to the department that one hundred young officers serving with volunteers be permitted to remain with them. Finally Cameron yielded. He sanctioned Blair's proposal and the President also gave his approval.[2] Thus after a struggle which dated back to the beginning of the war, the department and the old military leaders capitulated, and the new regiments of the national army were started on the road to competent leadership.

Among the general officers little change was made for the time being. Patterson, who had re-entered the service in April with the Pennsylvania militia, was retired to private life, his command in western Virginia being assigned to General Banks.[3] After Bull Run agitation developed to have General Wool brought out of virtual retirement at his

[1] Andrew to McClellan, Aug. 22, 1861, and endorsement, *ibid.*, pp. 444-445; Cameron to Dennison, Aug. 3, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 387; Lesley to D. Tyler, Aug. 16, 1861, Military Book No. 45.

[2] Frémont to Blair, Aug. 25, 1861, and endorsement, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 454.

[3] General Order No. 46, July 19, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 171.

Troy headquarters. The feeling still lurked that it was only because of his vigilance in preventing unscrupulous men from defrauding the government that he had been quietly disposed of by the War Department. On August 1 the New York Congressional delegation met to name twelve men to the President for brigadiers; at the same time they unanimously resolved to send a delegation to press for the assignment of Wool to a command. Pressure apparently turned the trick. A few days later Lincoln and Scott concurred in his assignment to Fort Monroe, displacing General Butler. On the 17th Wool assumed command.[1] A little later Halleck, another highly trained soldier, was brought back into the service and at Scott's suggestion was made a major-general of the regular army.[2] These two selections for active commands were improvements, but both men were too old to render first-class service. The handling of armies in the Civil War required men of greater energy, flexibility and dash, and the emergence of such commanders came only through the slow and painful process of "trial and error."[3]

Meanwhile, the reorganization work which McClellan began in late July was forging ahead in a most commendable way. He had rare talent for such labors and soon had

[1] *New York Times*, July 27 and 28, 1861; *New York Herald*, Aug. 1 and 11, 1861; Lincoln to Scott, Aug. 7, 1861, Tracy, *Uncollected Letters of Lincoln*, p. 192; Scott to Wool, Aug. 8, 1861; Butler to Scott, Aug. 11, 1861; Wool's order, Aug. 17, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iv, pp. 600-601.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. v, p. 186.

[3] General Cox says: "An evil which grew very great was that men in high rank were kept upon the roster after it was proven that they were incompetent, and when no army commander was willing to receive them as subordinates. Nominal commands at the rear or of a merely administrative kind were multiplied, and still many passed no small part of the war 'awaiting orders.' As the total number of general officers was limited by law, it followed of course, that promotion had to be withheld from many who had won it by service in the field." Cox, *Military Reminiscences*, p. 172.

injected so much of his own energy, diligence and skill into the Union forces under him that for a while the prospects for a successful fall campaign were extremely bright. He seemed to understand the necessity for action. In a memorandum to the President, dated August 2, and read to the Cabinet the following morning, he emphasized that our foreign relations and financial credit imperatively demanded that the military movements of the government should be prompt and irresistible.[1] On the 20th in a note to Lincoln he recommended that the Secretary of War ascertain at once how the enrollments were proceeding in the North, and suggested that if they were not progressing with great rapidity, drafts should be made immediately.[2]

Only in his relations with his superior, Scott, was there anything to criticize in the beginning in McClellan's conduct. Here he showed little patience, and in his eagerness to control was frequently disregardful and wanting in respect for the position and feelings of the "touchy" old general. Almost from the time of McClellan's arrival there had been friction. In his letter of August 2 to his wife he complained that Scott had been trying to "work a traverse" in the appointment of an inspector-general of "*my* army and of *the* army," and observed that since the "old man" was "fast becoming very slow and very old" he would probably retire and he, McClellan, was very likely to succeed to the post.[3]

If a maximum of benefit were to be gotten from this new, enlarged and rapidly developing army which McClellan had in hand, and if all were to run smoothly, it was absolutely

[1] McClellan to Lincoln, Aug. 2, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[2] McClellan to Lincoln, Aug. 20, 1861, McPherson, Edward, *A Political History of the United States of America during the Great Rebellion*, p. 274. The idea of a draft was suggested to McClellan by his father-in-law, Colonel R. B. Marcy.

[3] McClellan to his wife, Aug. 2, 1861, McClellan Letter Book, MSS.; Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. iii, pp. 378-379.

necessary for the War Department to keep abreast of it in complying with its manifold wants. The imperfections of the spring months and the Bull Run campaign with all its shortages and inadequacies had abundantly demonstrated this fact. The meeting of Congress provided an opportunity for remedying some of the difficulties, and to it Cameron and the bureau chiefs looked for aid. And they did not look in vain. Congress, as in the past, was generous when war was upon the country.

An Assistant Secretary of War was greatly needed to relieve Cameron of some of the enormous business and manifold duties which the war had brought. Even if he had brushed aside the trucklers and confined himself strictly to the affairs of his office, he could hardly have accomplished all that needed to be done. Recognizing this situation, Congress in an act approved August 3 authorized the appointment of an Assistant Secretary at an annual salary of $3000.[1] To this post Thomas A. Scott was appointed. Scott, it will be remembered, had been called to Washington in April and had shortly after become general manager of the military railroads and telegraph. It appears, however, that his activities steadily widened and that he was actually performing much of the work of an Assistant Secretary even before the office was created by law.[2]

Scott was one of the few men in the War Department in 1861 whose work stood out as being of a truly high order. He was not a politician, nor does he appear to have been hampered by any of the prejudices or niceties of regulations which impeded so much of the department's affairs. His

[1] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, p. 287. *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 158. Cameron declared that he worked from sixteen to twenty hours a day and that the departmental labors were the most strenuous he had ever encountered. *New York Herald*, May 8, 1862; Cameron to F. Kenney *et al.*, Nov. 21, 1861, Military Book No. 47, MSS.

[2] Ingersoll, *History of the War Department*, p. 345.

training in the well-organized Pennsylvania Railroad system doubtless stood him in good stead in his new labors and made him impatient of the puttering martinets in the several bureaus. It was he who exposed many of the time-sanctified obstructions and cleared out much of the dead-wood which helped to stifle efficient administration and retard progress.[1] One cannot but feel that the War Department would have been managed far more ably and energetically if he and Secretary Cameron had been in each other's places in that first trying year.

The act of August 3 also provided for numerous increases of military staff officers. The detailing of these was, of course, the duty of the bureau chiefs. It is certain that many of them were placed with the troops in the field, but it is probable that some were assigned to duty in the bureaus where there was great need of their services. The Quartermaster Office was extremely hard pressed by the demands made upon it by the army for quartermasters and assistants. Many of its trained personnel had already been transferred to field work, weakening the bureau's administrative service, and further requests were constantly being made. Inexperienced officers who had to learn their business as they went along were a source of much embarrassment. So overwhelmed was the office that Meigs was often obliged to hire assistants even though he was without legal authority to do so.[2]

Another act, approved on July 27, provided for augmenting temporarily the civil force of clerks and messengers in the War Office and its bureaus and appropriated additional funds for their remuneration. Six clerks and two assistant messengers were added to the Secretary's office; ten clerks and two assistants to the Quartermaster's, five clerks to the Com-

[1] Chittenden, *Recollections of Lincoln and His Administration*, pp. 169-170.

[2] *Cong. Globe, op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

missary-General's, one to the Surgeon-General's, six to the Paymaster's, one to the Bureau of Topographical Engineers and two to the Ordinance Office. The adjutant-general was authorized to employ any number of non-commissioned officers, not exceeding ten, in addition to his present force.[1] The various increases provided for in the office forces were almost identical with the additions requested by the bureau chiefs, and indicate how acquiescent Congress really was under the stress of war.[2] By December the department business had again grown to such proportions that the Secretary was obliged to ask for another increase, this time for sixty-six additional clerks, messengers and laborers.[3]

There is no evidence that the department underwent any great change in its administrative procedure after Bull Run. Assistant Secretary Scott's efforts were helpful, but as John M. Forbes aptly said a little later: "The moment you attack one bureau, it becomes personal to all fossildom." All arrayed themselves against changes.[4] Ledgers and press-books were kept just as they had been formerly; letters were

[1] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, p. 277. It is interesting and significant to note that no additions had been made to the clerical force of the Adjutant-General's Office since 1848. This fact emphasizes the handicap under which the bureau worked before an increase was obtained. Thomas to Cameron, July 16, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.

[2] B. F. Larned to Cameron, July 10, 1861; Thomas to Cameron, July 16, 1861, *ibid.*; Ripley to Cameron, June 24, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861; Meigs to Cameron, July 16, 1861, Letters and Reports to the Secretary of War, No. 5, MSS., Quartermaster-General's Office. On September 30, 1861, there were in the War Department and its offices in Washington 117 clerks, messengers and laborers. In the department at large there were, exclusive of the 117, about 750 employes serving in various capacities and in various places. *Register of Officers and Agents*, 1861, pp. 100-113.

[3] Cameron to Grow, Dec. 30, 1861, Reports to Congress, No. 10, MSS., War Office.

[4] Forbes to Olmsted, Dec. 21, 1861, Hughes, *John M. Forbes, Letters and Recollections*, vol. i, p. 269.

passed about from bureau to bureau for endorsements, sometimes three, four and five in number. No new systems appear to have been devised.

A subject which came up for consideration in the summer and fall of 1861, while not strictly a part of the reorganization, may be mentioned here. This concerned the investigations made into the loyalty of government employes by a Congressional committee headed by John F. Potter. Replying to an inquiry made, Cameron on July 18 informed Chairman Potter that no person engaged in the department was known to entertain sentiments of hostility to the government, nor had anyone refused to take the oath to support the federal Constitution.[1] A month later, however, two lists were sent to the Secretary naming persons in the department against whose loyalty testimony had been taken. The first gave the names of those "disloyal to the government of the United States, and in sympathy with the attempt of the rebels to overthrow the present government." Here the evidence was deemed by the committee to be conclusive. Thirty persons were mentioned, some in the department, others in the army and the United States arsenal at Washington and a few in other pursuits under the supervision of the department. The second list contained the names of those "against whom the evidence furnished a well-grounded suspicion of their loyalty."[2] In October two more lists of a similar nature were reported to the Secretary involving twenty-seven persons.[3] It was, of course, expected that Cameron would take prompt and appropriate action in ridding the service, civil and military, of all such persons. But he did nothing of the

[1] Cameron to Potter, July 18, 1861, Reports to Congress, No. 10, MSS.; Meigs to Cameron, July 16, 1861, Letters and Reports to the Secretary of War, No. 5.

[2] *House Report* No. 16, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 4-5.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

kind. When the committee inquired of Cameron two months later as to what disposition had been made of the cases reported, Thomas A. Scott replied with reference only to the employes of the several bureaus, stating that since the July report four had been dismissed and nine had resigned.[1] In the latter group was James Lesley, Jr., the chief clerk, who had resigned to take a consular post abroad. No justifications were made for retaining many against whom charges had been made. In his attitude and action Cameron in this case was probably quite right. War does much to breed suspicion and hasty and ill-founded charges and Congressional committees were not wholly exempt in this regard. Cameron's long legislative service had doubtless inspired in him a good deal of contempt for such investigators, and particularly at this time when a poking, inquisitive Committee on Contracts was inquiring into his departmental expenditures.[2]

Accompanying the recruiting and organizing of the newly augmented force, now assuming unparalleled proportions, were many of the same vexatious problems which had caused the department and its bureaus so much trouble throughout the spring and early summer. Primary among these was the task of arming and outfitting the fresh regiments. Meigs in October said it was a remarkable thing that men should volunteer so rapidly that the resources of the country were unable to provide the material for clothing them as fast as they came forward. The government was in debt to contractors at all the principal points of purchase and, he feared, would remain so for some time to come. It was hoped, however, that if the troops could once be equipped, the great stimulus to maufacturing at home and the importations

[1] *House Report* No. 16, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 6-8; Scott to Potter, Dec. 9, 1861, Reports to Congress, *loc. cit.*

[2] *Report of the Committee on Contracts, House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., parts i and ii.

expected from abroad would enable the department to keep them from suffering.[1]

On the whole, there was remarkably little complaint of the quartermaster service after the first few months except where unscrupulous contractors failed in their obligations or sought to defraud the government. And where these scandals occurred they were generally the result of unusual and irregular arrangements made by commanders of military departments, as in the case of Frémont in Missouri, or due to the interference of the Secretary. The shortages of clothing, shoes and transportation, it is true, were notable in the Bull Run campaign, but by the fall season so much progress in acquiring and distributing these commodities had been made that, in spite of the fact that shortages still occurred, the protests from state and military officials became comparatively few in number.

Much of the credit for this achievement belongs to the quartermaster-general, Montgomery C. Meigs, a man of dynamic energy, great resourcefulness and splendid administrative capacity. He knew how to disregard the red-tape and traditional formulas of procedure and resisted in commendable fashion the attempt of Congress to saddle upon him fresh regulations which would have served little good and seriously retarded the acquisition of supplies.[2]

[1] Meigs to Morgan, Oct. 10, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 570.

[2] Meigs to Wilson, Aug. 2, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 378-379. Meigs was forty-five years old when he became quartermaster-general. He was graduated from West Point in 1836 and entered the artillery branch of the service, but transferred the following year to the engineer corps. From then until 1852 he was employed by the War Department on various important engineering projects. For the next eight years he superintended the construction of the Potomac Aqueduct, the erection of the Capitol extension, the great iron dome of the Capitol and the Post Office extension. In the winter of 1860-1861 Meigs was engaged in putting Fort Jefferson in Florida in condition for defense. He held the rank of captain when the war began, but upon taking over the control of the quartermaster work he was advanced to a brigadier generalship. *New International Encyclopaedia*, vol. xv, pp. 355-356.

In matters of ordnance the War Department was less fortunate. Complaints of arms shortages and weapons of inferior quality never ceased. One difficulty here was, of course, the fact that the government itself was utterly unprepared in 1861 to produce in its Springfield Armory a quantity of rifles commensurate with the need, nor were the private arms establishments sufficiently numerous nor suitably equipped to turn out the vast quantities required on such short notices. When they did multiply in numbers and increase their capacities for production as the war progressed, the difficulties were in large measure overcome. It may also be added in explaining the unsatisfactory situation of the ordnance supply that the bureau chief, General Ripley, appears never to have had the energy, resourcefulness and administrative capacity which the more youthful Meigs so consistently displayed.[1]

The ordnance problem became an extremely pressing one when the calling of 500,000 volunteers was authorized late in July. The June estimates for arms had been based upon a force of 250,000 men and the bureau had been proceeding accordingly. Inadequate though these estimates were, the

[1] So impatient did Governor Dennison become of the delay and vacillation of the War Department in general, and the Ordnance Bureau in particular, that he sent a committee of three Ohioans to press matters. For weeks he had written letters and sent telegrams asking for arms, but had no success. Twelve companies of cavalry had been raised on the assurance from Ripley that arms and equipments would be sent. When the troops were about ready to march, Ripley wired expressing doubt of his ability to arm them. The same had been the case with certain batteries of artillery. Unless arms were forthcoming, Dennison declared a large portion of them would have to be disbanded. Andrew had similar trouble when he relied upon the War Department and Ordnance Bureau. In October he wrote that orders had been given by Cameron six weeks earlier for the sending of arms to Massachusetts, but they had never arrived. Letters, telegrams and personal representatives had availed nothing. Dennison to C. Delano *et al.*, Aug. 30, 1861; Dennison to Cameron, Sept. 7, 1861; Andrew to Cameron, Oct. 11, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 469-472, 491, 572.

activities of troops in the field with the usual attendant losses had resulted in a still greater shortage. Again, a suggestion made in the spring that from 50,000 to 100,000 arms be purchased in Europe had been vetoed by Cameron on the ground that the home market should be patronized.[1] Had he acted upon the suggestion, the problem would not have been so serious when new levies were being raised and sent to the front. Immediately after the July increase in the army, however, Cameron received an additional appropriation of $10,000,000 for ordnance, and with the President's consent, commissioned George L. Schuyler to go to Europe as a government purchasing agent. Schuyler was authorized to obtain large quantities of muskets, cavalry sabres, revolvers and carbines.[2] At the same time the productive capacity of the Springfield Armory was quickly doubled, and it was expected that by October it would be able to turn out 10,000 arms per month. Every known private manufactory of arms in the country was also employed to increase the store.[3] But the deficiency for immediate use was everywhere manifest and brought down upon the heads of the Secretary and ordnance chief the wrath of the governors.

[1] Ripley to Cameron, June 19 and July 28, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 278-279, 361, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.

[2] Cameron to Wilson, July 27, 1861, Cameron's order, July 27, 1861; Cameron to Schuyler, July 29, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 355, 363; *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, p. 286.

[3] Cameron to Morgan, Sept. 27, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 544. Where such a vast amount of contracting was being done by the Ordnance Bureau and others, it became necessary for the Treasury Department to have weekly estimates of funds needed for payments. Cameron was therefore requested to report such estimates in advance. He was also reminded that the utmost vigilance and economy were necessary in expenditures. Chase to Cameron, Aug. 17, 1861; Harrington to Cameron, Sept. 5, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS. At an earlier time Cameron had ordered Ripley to report to him weekly on contracts made and obligations incurred. This was done to facilitate War and Treasury administration. Cameron to Ripley, May 27, 1861, *ibid.*

The state executives entered into the new recruiting work after Bull Run with the same vigor and earnestness that had characterized their first efforts. They desired guns immediately so that the troops being raised might learn the manual of arms and not depart from the state in a defenseless condition. Morgan of New York wrote to Seward on September 25 that he had appealed to both Cameron and Ripley for more arms and now begged him to aid in the matter. The state had spent half a million dollars in Europe for arms; the authorities had exhausted their powers and they now looked to the federal government. New York had not received a modern rifle since the war began. Requisitions had been made for a fair proportion of them and all that came were old smooth-bore muskets of 1822 and 1842. He demanded that some reason be given for such discrimination against the state.[1] On the same day Morton of Indiana wrote one of his "fire-eater" letters. The state had a half-dozen regiments ready to move and not a gun for them. The last men sent to General Anderson in Kentucky carried flint-lock muskets. The recruiting service in Indiana would stop if guns were not furnished. "My State has done well," he said, "stripped herself of arms for the Government, and the war is now upon her border. If I have done anything the Government don't like, charge it to me and do not let the State suffer. I wish this shown to the President." The net result of this discharge from the governor's pen was the sending to him two days later of 3500 arms and a promise of more the next day.[2] Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Ohio suffered in the same way as New York and Indiana, and as late as December 23, word came to the War Department of Pennsylvania troops being unable to leave simply because they had no arms. Here

[1] Morgan to Seward, Sept. 25, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 540.

[2] Morton to Scott, Sept. 25, 1861; Scott to Morton, Sept. 27, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 539, 543.

the legislature had by law forbidden the sending of troops out of the state without them.[1] In January, 1862, the *New York Times* charged that a large proportion of the troops was still furnished with old-fashioned smooth-bore muskets in spite of all that had been purchased. It was with these weapons, it was alleged, that Union soldiers at Ball's Bluff in October, 1861, had faced and fled from an enemy armed with Enfield and Minié rifles.[2]

Perhaps nowhere in the autumn were the arms shortage and general condition more aggravating than in Kentucky where General Sherman had just taken command. His staff officers were without money to supply necessities, none of his brigadiers except one had seen service, clothing was scarce and arms were lacking. He was "moving heaven and earth" to get them but found that McClellan and Frémont had nearly drained the supply. General Anderson, Governor Morton and James Guthrie joined him in begging for arms, munitions and men. Their reminders were constant and urgent. They stressed the impending danger of the Confederates massing against them in large numbers, but got little satisfaction from the Secretary for their labors.[3] Then Cameron went out to see for himself and his eyes were opened. From Louisville he hurriedly informed the President that matters were in a far worse condition than he had expected to find. He wired to Assistant Secretary Scott to send on immediate shipments of arms and reinforcements.[4]

[1] Andrew to Cameron, Aug. 22, 1861; Curtin to Cameron, Sept. 15 and 18, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 443, 517, 526; *vide*, p. 205, footnote; J. Y. James to T. A. Scott, Dec. 23, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 756.

[2] *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1862.

[3] W. T. Sherman to Thomas, Oct. 8, 1861, W. T. Sherman MSS.; *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iv, pp. 254-362, *passim*. W. T. Sherman to John Sherman, Oct. 26, 1861, Thorndyke, *Sherman Letters*, p. 134.

[4] Cameron to Lincoln; Cameron to Scott, Oct. 26, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 308.

Sherman believed a force of 200,000 men would be needed, but Cameron thought this an exaggeration, and upon leaving Kentucky said Sherman was crazy, and unfit for any military command.[1] The agitation, however, had its effect. Conditions were bettered in the state. Joshua F. Speed went to Washington and New York in October to get arms from the government and by purchase. By the end of November he was able to report that he was getting a "pretty fair supply" and as much money as was needed.[2]

[1] Foulke, *Morton*, vol. i, p. 147; Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 313-314.

[2] J. F. Speed to Holt, Oct. 18 and 19, Nov. 28, 1861, Holt MSS.; T. A. Scott to J. Guthrie, Nov. 10, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 349.

CHAPTER VII

Conflicts and Protests

After Bull Run a factor which returned—if it was ever absent—to annoy, antagonize and retard the governors in their recruiting efforts was the granting of authorizations to individuals to raise regiments in their states. Perhaps due in part to the alarm, and in large measure to stimulate the rapid augmentation of the forces, the number of these was considerably increased. In fact the chief clerk stated on August 6 that the War Department had accepted twice as many regiments from independent agencies as from state executives.[1] One of the first of these new authorizations was given on July 22, when an Iowa Congressman proposed that the Secretary received a regiment to be recruited, organized and led by himself. Cameron promptly accepted in spite of the fact that the state's governor had previously refused to recognize any independent organizations. Similarly two friends of the Assistant Postmaster General were permitted to recruit regiments in Iowa.[2]

Other independent authorizations followed in quick succession in the various loyal states. And immediately protests and troubles began. As early as August 7, Governor Morgan told Cameron that the numerous skeleton organizations created unnecessary competition and resulted in no regiments being enlisted to full strength. The knowledge of this fact should have prompted Cameron to abandon the practice completely, but he did no such thing. A week later the governor wrote again saying it would be necessary to consolidate these

[1] Lesley to J. A. Wright, Aug. 6, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 390.

[2] Briggs, John E., "The Enlistment of Iowa Troops during the Civil War," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, vol. xv, pp. 345-346.

independent regiments as many of them could not reach their quota. He also emphasized the importance of receiving troops through the constituted authorities only and expressed willingness to use every effort to meet the wishes of the government. On the 19th he reiterated the same views and bewailed the misfortune of two systems of recruiting, but without immediate effect.[1]

Yates of Illinois suffered in a similar way. He had telegraphed the department repeatedly for authority to accept all the troops offered in the state but had not received even a reply. On August 14 he made one more appeal and stated that he could have had troops enough at that time to meet any menacing force in the West but for the interference from Washington in accepting independent regiments without informing him. These had broken up his organization. This letter brought results. Yates was immediately given power to accept all volunteers offering their services and received a pledge that the War Office would not take any more independent regiments.[2] Why the Secretary yielded to Yates and not to Morgan who wrote at the same time is difficult to see unless it be that Cameron retained some enmity as a result of the triangular quarrel in May.

No executive framed a more effective protest against this pernicious recruiting practice than did the competent Andrew Curtin of Pennsylvania. On August 21 he wrote directly to the President pointing out that aside from a requisition made upon the governor for ten regiments, fifty-eight individuals had received authority to enlist men in competition with the state officials, and the result had been embarrassment, delay and confusion. Attempts were made to inveigle men from the ranks of state companies and

[1] Morgan to Cameron, Aug. 7, 14 and 19, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 390, 411, 429-430.

[2] Yates to Cameron; Cameron to Yates, Aug. 14, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 409-410.

into independent contingents, and they were not without success. The upshot of the conflicting efforts was that after nearly a month of work there was not a single regiment out of about seventy which had a full quota. If all were consolidated as they should be, Curtin said, there would be nearly thirty of regulation strength. Furthermore, he pointed out that the prevailing practice was not only unwise, but unlawful as well. The federal statutes of July 22 and 25 made the governors the receiving agencies for troops and conferred upon them the appointment of regimental officers. Again, the Pennsylvania law of May 15 forbade any volunteer to leave the state except under the governor's order and direction.[1]

Governors Blair of Michigan, Andrew of Massachusetts and Dennison of Ohio likewise protested and railed against the system and demanded that it be discontinued, all contending that it served little good and did much harm.[2] After a month or so of constant storming, Cameron began to give way. On the 29th he informed Morgan that direct acceptances had been made only to expedite the raising of troops and to remove the impression that the department was unwilling to receive all troops offered. He also promised that all regiments raised would be directed to report to the governor for their commissions.[3] While Cameron's excuse was hardly convincing in view of all Morgan had heard to the contrary, it was doubtless gratifying to the governor to learn that the practice was about at an end.

On September 5, a general order was issued placing all troops being raised in New York under Morgan's charge for

[1] Curtin to Lincoln, Aug. 21, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 439-441.

[2] Blair to Cameron, Aug. 19, 1861; Dennison to Cameron, Aug. 23, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 428, 447; Schouler, *History of Massachusetts in the Civil War*, vol. i, p. 253.

[3] Cameron to Morgan, Aug. 29, 1861, Military Book No. 10, MSS.

reorganization. At the same time, as a result of conference between Lincoln, Cameron and two Massachusetts agents, a like order was made to apply to the Bay State. On the 7th another placed all volunteer organizations in Pennsylvania under Curtin's supervision, and on September 16, a blanket order extended the regulation to all the states.[1] Thus a thoroughly bad practice was, in the main, brought to an end. Exceptions to it were occasionally made but they were not sufficiently numerous or, as a general rule, of such a nature as to be of very serious consequence.[2]

The authorization to General "Ben" Butler to raise regiments in New England in the fall of 1861 was the most notable of these exceptions, and resulted in one of the most bitter and exasperating quarrels of the entire war. This episode, like the one in May involving Governor Morgan and the Union Defence Committee, is so illustrative of the maladministration of the War Department under Cameron's management in relation to recruiting and illustrates so well the evil of the prevailing system of enlisting and officering volunteers that it is deserving of attention in some detail.[3]

About the time that Butler was displaced at Fort Monroe by the assigning of General Wool to the post, he obtained the consent of the President to the recruiting of 5,000 men in

[1] Schouler, *op. cit.*, p. 254; Special Order No. 241, Sept. 7, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 489; General Order No. 78, Sept. 16, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 518.

[2] Military Books Nos. 45 and 46, *passim.* In some instances during August and September, Cameron made acceptances from independent agencies conditional upon the state quota being filled first. This helped allay controversy. *Ibid.*

[3] The following account of the Butler-Andrew controversy is based mainly upon the following works: Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, pp. 212-359, *passim*; Pearson, *Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 283-311; Schouler, *History of Massachusetts in the Civil War*, vol. i, pp. 251-281. The greater part of the correspondence involved is to be found, chronologically arranged, in *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 811-866. Where correspondence from other sources or pages has been used, citations to it are given in the footnotes.

New England, his plan being, he said, to raise regiments of Democrats. Some difficulty or delay was encountered in the War Department in obtaining the necessary orders, but on the 17th Thomas A. Scott issued them and after some grumbling about being "sent off as a recruiting officer," Butler proceeded to his work.[1] On August 2 and 11, however, Cameron had given orders of a similar nature to General Thomas W. Sherman for the recruiting of 12,000 men in the same section, these to be employed in an expedition not yet disclosed.[2] On the 27th letters were sent to the New England governors requesting that they place regiments being raised under Sherman's orders. Thus there was to be competition between two agencies for the recruiting of 17,000 men, a circumstance likely to lead to conflict.[3]

Andrew and other executives at once set out to comply in aiding Sherman, Andrew receiving assurance early in September as a result of the conference between Lincoln, Cameron and the two Massachusetts agents that no more independent recruiting would be permitted in the state. While all efforts were concentrated in helping Sherman, Andrew was suddenly surprised to find that the Secretary on September 10 issued an authorization to Butler to raise, arm, uniform and equip six regiments in New England. The permission given was, of course, a restatement of the order issued by

[1] Butler to T. A. Scott, Aug. 8, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iv, p. 600; Scott to Butler, Aug. 17, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 423; Butler to M. Blair, Aug. 19, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, pp. 219-220.

[2] T. A. Scott to Sherman, Aug. 2 and 11, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. vi, p. 168.

[3] On September 11, Cameron also gave his approval to a plan submitted by McClellan, whereby General Burnside was to raise in New England a force of ten regiments. The recruiting of Burnside appears not to have conflicted with the other movements. At least no complaints were made concerning him. Pearson, *Andrew*, vol. i, p. 287; S. Williams to Burnside, Sept. 12, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 500.

Scott the previous month, but it was nevertheless a violation of the pledge more recently given to Andrew's representatives. On September 11 Lincoln and Cameron sought the governor's consent to the Butler project. He expressed willingness to aid, but made it conditional upon filling up Sherman's quota first. Cameron replied evasively on the 12th, acknowledging receipt of Andrew's message and saying: "Massachusetts has done so well in all she has promised she shall not be disappointed in anything she desires from the General Government." The same day he issued a statement permitting Butler "to fit out and prepare such troops in New England as he may judge fit for the purpose, to make an expedition along the Eastern Shore of Virginia..." Four days later, however, came the blanket order placing all officers recruiting and their troops in all the states under the governors' orders. This certainly seemed to include Butler along with the rest, but it was also quite contradictory to the privilege just granted to the general.

On the strength of the general order, Andrew issued one forbidding recruiting for new regiments until Sherman had been cared for. To this Cameron agreed, saying Sherman should be supplied first, and on the same day, September 23, Assistant Secretary Scott wired in the same vein, telling Andrew to select the regiments for this officer first. But the Secretary immediately contradicted his own and Scott's words by ordering Colonel Henry Wilson and his men to report to Butler. Wilson's regiment was thus placed in the latter's force, although Andrew had intended it for Sherman's. At once Andrew objected and complained of being much perplexed and embarrassed by contradictory orders and assurances, and insisted that only by acting through, rather than outside of, the governor could affairs be properly handled. Again the Secretary expressed willingness to act according to Andrew's wishes and to allow Sherman's quota

to be raised first, saying the orders issued had been designed "to be subject to the approval and control of the Executive of Massachusetts," and with a suavity that almost never failed him, he asserted that "This Department reposes entire confidence in one who has thus far discharged with fidelity, ability, and energy every duty required of him by the General Government."

Thus the protracted conflict began with cross purposes, irregularities and conflicting orders, and so it continued, Andrew and Butler growing constantly in their distrust and antipathy toward one another. As a result of the department's blanket order of the 16th and Andrew's general one, Butler seemed for the moment a beaten man, but he was actually far from it. He hurried to Washington, exerted pressure and with the help of Seward obtained a general order creating temporarily the Military Department of New England with headquarters at Boston.[1] Butler then proclaimed the formation of the department, and stated: "All officers in command of troops mustered into service of the United States will report either in person or by letter to these headquarters." To stimulate his enlistments he had also prevailed upon the Secretary of War to give one month's pay in advance to all volunteers joining his organization. Thus Butler was riding on the crest of the wave again.[2] That he was in good standing with Cameron was evident from the fact that he had gained the advance pay privilege for his recruits, while a request by Andrew on October 5 for a half month's pay in advance to all Massachusetts soldiers enlisting met with the Secretary's prompt refusal.

[1] Butler to Seward, Oct. 15, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 263.

[2] Butler was further aided by the fact that Sherman soon ceased to be a factor in the competitive recruiting for he was assigned to another department and the command of his special expedition given to Burnside. Butler also had the satisfaction of seeing Colonel Wilson's regiment taken from the governor. On October 3 it was ordered to Washington.

Now that he was in a strategic position Butler wrote out his case and laid it before the governor, probably in accordance with Seward's suggestion that he and Andrew settle their differences amicably.[1] But the governor knew his ground and his strength and instantly rebuffed the general. He said: "I mean to do just what I have from the first persistently done, and that is, to hold with an iron hand and unswerving purpose all the powers which, by the laws pertain to me officially...." This and subsequent correspondence made it perfectly plain to both men that there was no chance for an agreement between them in recruiting and in commissioning officers for the regiments raised by the general. Therefore each again sought relief and assistance in Washington. Butler turned to Seward requesting his "friendly intervention if necessary to prevent any orders" which might embarrass him, and received the assurance that the Secretary of State would attend to the general's wishes with the "utmost care."[2] On November 11 he again wrote to Seward saying he needed one or two brigadiers and suggested that Caleb Cushing be detailed to him. He had already mentioned Cushing to the President and indicated that Lincoln "did not look upon the matter unkindly."[3] This same day the general also wrote to Montgomery Blair telling him that he had failed utterly in his attempts to arrange matters with the governor and had abased himself in trying. "Governor Andrew," he said, "goes to Washington today to upset me; do not let him do it. I cannot leave here for a week to attend to him because Monday next I get off twenty-five hundred men. This little piece of secession must be stopped or we shall have a rebellion at home."[4] To Cam-

[1] Butler to Seward, Oct. 15, 1861, Butler, *op. cit.*

[2] *Ibid.*; Seward to Butler, Oct. 18, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 254.

[3] Butler to Seward, Nov. 11, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 277-278.

[4] Butler to Blair, Nov. 11, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 277.

eron he also penned a fervent appeal. Among other things, he said, he had bought rations cheaply and chartered ships at a low figure. "I have ventured upon this every stake I have in the country, and you shall be proud of my work, but pray do not let me be crippled." [1]

Andrew's trip to Washington, if he went at all, apparently availed him little, nor did the numerous letters which he wrote to the War Department bring satisfactory replies. The truth of the matter was that both Lincoln and Cameron had been anxious to steer clear of the whole trouble. They had from the first looked upon it as a factional squabble in the state of Massachusetts,[2] had hoped it would be smoothed over, and were quite discomfited when they found it on their hands. They had believed that at the proper time Andrew could be prevailed upon to sacrifice a little in the interest of party harmony and larger war interests. In his jovial way Lincoln excused the charge made that the general had thrown Massachusetts recruiting into confusion by saying that Butler was cross-eyed and probably did not see things as other folks did. But there was little satisfaction to the irate governor in such an explanation, and he did not make the expected sacrifice. The manifest reluctance of the President to intervene in a decisive way and the failure of the War Department to do more than urge the governor to give commissions to the officers of Butler's regiments so they could advance, merely

[1] Butler to Cameron, Nov. 13, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 637.

[2] There was good reason to believe this. Butler had recently opposed Andrew in the race for the governorship and had incurred Andrew's displeasure in showing readiness to use Massachusetts troops in putting down a slave insurrection in Maryland in April. Butler to Hicks; Hicks to Butler, Apr. 23, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, pp. 593-594; Pearson, *Andrew*, vol. i, pp. 284-285. Again the fact that Andrew did not object to the authorizations given to Sherman and Burnside and did not quarrel with them pointed in the same direction. Butler appears to have had no trouble with the other New England governors. Butler to Thomas, Nov. 18, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 653-654.

served to aggravate the problem, stiffen Andrew's resolution to stand by his guns a while longer, delay the recruiting and forwarding of troops, and prolong the controversy through the closing months of the year.

Despairing of his own efforts, and tired and disgusted with the whole business, on December 21, however, Andrew sent copies of the entire correspondence to the Massachusetts Senators requesting them to go over it and then present it to the President. On January 10, 1862, Senator Sumner replied, saying he had been authorized by the War Department to say that if Andrew's program with reference to General Butler were forwarded, it would be carried out and the Department of New England abandoned. This drew an angry retort from the governor for in response to a telegram from the President requesting him to "arrange somehow" with Butler for the officering of two unofficered regiments, he had finally acquiesced and outlined what he was ready to do, but had also set forth his powers and prerogatives in no uncertain terms. He now told Sumner that his, Andrew's, letters should be directly, and not indirectly, answered by the President or the War Department.

By this time, January 14, Cameron had ceased to be Secretary of War, and the appointment of Edwin M. Stanton to the post gave promise of an early settlement. As soon as impending business was cleared, Stanton summoned Andrew to Washington and an agreement was speedily reached. Two regular army officers were assigned to command two regiments around which much of the latter part of the quarrel had centered; Andrew was accorded the right to name others, and the Department of New England was abandoned. Spiteful attempts of Butler to strike back at the governor were promptly curbed by the new Secretary, and he was soon dispatched on an expedition to the Gulf region. As a parting gesture he proclaimed that the Department of New England,

temporarily created for recruiting, had fulfilled its purposes and had been abolished.

In behalf of the President and Secretary Cameron it should be acknowledged that the political phases of the quarrel, which were certainly entitled to consideration, made decisive action at an early day difficult and rather impolitic. Even if both had not looked upon it as local complication, the summary handling of either party might have been of serious consequence. Andrew had a powerful Abolitionist following, and enjoyed the prestige coming from a recent election to the governorship. The Lincoln administration needed the full support of the powerful state of Massachusetts in upholding the Union cause and Andrew was in a fair way to lead in this direction. On the other hand, Butler was not to be brushed aside lightly. While there was much of the demagogue about him, there was no gainsaying the fact that he was a crafty politician and had a very considerable following in his own section. That he had been a Breckinridge Democrat in the last Presidential election made it the more desirable to cultivate him since the President was now anxious to placate and harmonize all elements. And Cameron was too good a politician to overlook this point. Butler demonstrated his shrewdness in strengthening his own case when he declared that Andrew's contention that recruiting could be done only through state authorities was nothing more nor less than rank secession doctrine that "did not seem to me any more sound uttered by a Governor north of the Mason and Dixon's line than if proclaimed, south, so I paid no heed to it; did not answer it. . . ."[1]

Cameron and the President were at fault, however, in that they did not adhere to the regular procedure of recruiting in accordance with the law, and, as has been shown, their failure to do so met with little more approval among other state exec-

[1] Butler to Thomas, Nov. 18, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 655.

utives than it did with Andrew. Both men were, to be sure, victims of a military policy which was seriously at fault in that it provided for diversified authority and responsibility, but under the circumstances existing, there is reason to presume that there would have been an equal or greater outpouring of volunteers and far less friction and delay if they had held strictly to the regulations.

Another source of trouble which continued to menace satisfactory administration and add to the general confusion after Bull Run just as it had before, was the daily interference in departmental affairs by well-meaning, but meddlesome, Cabinet officers and others. Some of this was doubtless inspired by a lack of confidence in Secretary Cameron to fulfill the duties of his office. But much of it was also due to the fact that they were constantly being goaded on by commanders in the field and officials in the states to get special favors or press important matters pertaining to military and recruiting movements.[1] But whatever its purpose it was a

[1] Some extracts from the diary of the newly appointed Senator Browning will illustrate the extent to which interference in the department and its bureaus was carried:

July 17, 1861. "Immediately after breakfast went to the war department with Jno. Wilson of Chicago to get a German Regt of Chicago accepted."

July 18, 1861. "Immediately after breakfast went with Benham to the war department to see about contract for clothing."

July 23, 1861. "Immediately after breakfast went with Dr. Johns to war department, and got Pughs Decatur Regt accepted. Also procured an order from Secy of War to Genl. Hurlburt to make connection of Quincy and Palmyra Rail Road with Hannibal & St. Jo Rail R. at Palmyra which I enclosed to Chas. A. Savage of Quincy."

July 25, 1861. "I also got a positive promise from the President, Secretary of War and Adjutant Genl that B. M. Prentiss should be appointed Brigadier, of which the Secretary authorized me to inform him by telegraph."

July 27, 1861. "At night went to Trumbulls rooms to meet the Illinois delegation and agree upon Brig: Genl for our State. Pope & Hurlburt being already appointed we thought we would be entitled to seven more.

hindrance to the War Department. As in the spring months, Blair, Chase, Seward and the President were leaders in this work.

Frémont in the West was particularly notorious in exacting assistance from every possible source. From the time he was commissioned he persistently violated military regulations in appealing directly to the President, Cabinet members, Congressmen and governors. With a true politician's instinct he used pressure and influence to obtain his ends, and it must be admitted that his efforts were generally attended with success. Blair for a time was his chief intermediary, but the President was always attentive. Before Frémont left for the West, Blair assured him that Lincoln was going in person to the War Department to "arrange matters" for him.[1] After he reached there his appeals for men, money, arms and supplies were almost daily, and Blair, Lincoln, Cameron, the bureaus and the western governors were all busy providing them.[2] When toward the end of August the Postmaster General stormed the Quartermaster Bureau bewailing Frémont's needs, Meigs promptly replied that every requisition

I was for Prentiss, McClernand, Payne, Richardson, Palmer, Grant and Stokes."

August 3, 1861. "After breakfast went to War Depart: and had Regiment accepted for Dr. Bain and K. K. Jones."

August 8, 1861. "Then went with Henry Lawrence to Treasury department—Then to Surgeon generals to see about hospital at Quincy—Then to War Department to see about appointments of Tillson & Briggs —Then to the Presidents—Then home. . . ."

August 9, 1861. "Went to the Presidents and had a talk with him. He then went with me to Genl Scotts and had a talk with him. We then went to the War Department, and I got Hollowbush appointed Commissary—Got an order from Dept to Gov. Yates for Genl McClernand, and went to Surgeon generals to see about appointments for the hospitals at Quincy."

[1] Blair to Frémont, July 15, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 395.

[2] *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, pp. 409-513, *passim*; *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 360-596, *passim*.

that the general had made had been complied with.[1] The truth was that Frémont was insatiable. So persistent did he prove in his demands, so indiscreet was his conduct, so little did he accomplish and so rife with corrupt abuses did his military department become that ere long he lost the friendship of Blair and the confidence of Lincoln, and in October was relieved of his command.[2]

While Blair was busy with Frémont, Seward was especially solicitous about all that affected McClellan. Although at first Seward had been in great intimacy with General Scott, after McClellan's coming to Washington, he transferred his attentions to the junior general and vied with the President in attempting to provide his every need.[3] At the same time he kept himself thoroughly posted on all troops moving into the capital. Welles tells of an episode to which he was a witness which illustrates Seward's alertness in this connection. At a conference on military operations a question arose as to the number of troops in and around Washington. Cameron could not answer it, McClellan did not, and General Scott complained that reports were not made to him. But Seward promptly drew forth a small paper and gave the size of the several commands, the approximate correctness of which McClellan then confirmed. Lincoln was disturbed; Scott was furious. Seward claimed he had obtained his information by keeping account of the daily arrivals of regiments, but the old general was not wholly satisfied of this and thought it a strange thing that Seward should be informed while he was kept in ignorance. Cameron broke in, half earnestly, half ironically, and said that " we all knew that Seward was meddlesome—interfering in all departments with what was

[1] Meigs to F. P. Blair, Aug. 28, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, pp. 463-464.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, p. 433.

[3] Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, pp. 135, 526; *ibid.*, Narrative of Events Commencing March 6, 1861, MS.; McClellan, George B., *Own Story*, p. 84.

none of his business." [1] That the Secretary of State did keep himself well informed of movements, Welles believed true, but that he also dabbled persistently in the War Department's affairs is verified in the correspondence which he carried on with governors, general and others.[2]

At the same time Chase continued to rival Seward in attention to military matters and the department's affairs. As heretofore he was particularly interested in what went on in the border states, and especially in Kentucky, just south of his own Ohio. On September 17 he wrote to General William T. Sherman that he would exert himself to have more arms sent to him, and would do all possible to sustain him. The following day he assured General Nelson, operat-

[1] Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, pp. 241-242.

[2] Seward's sphere of influence in war matters was greatly enlarged when in the latter part of July he became a controlling factor in espionage seizures. This work, it would seem, properly belonged to the War Office or the Department of Justice, but as in other instances where new duties and responsibilities arose which did not specifically devolve upon certain officers or were not promptly exercised by them, Seward took charge. Cameron and the military men cooperated with him. Since the President had given authority to suspend the writ of *habeus corpus*, the power of arbitrary arrest was a great one. Seward gave an indication of its extent when he said to Lord Lyon: "I can touch a bell on my right hand and order the imprisonment of a citizen of Ohio; I can touch a bell again and order the imprisonment of a citizen of New York; and no power on earth except the President can release them." Between July and February, when Stanton demanded and obtained the control of arrests, Seward's organization arrested nearly a thousand persons. He joined with Cameron and the military in the seizing of the secessionist members of the Maryland legislature in September and acted for the President in directing McClellan to maintain order during the Maryland elections in November. Bancroft, *Seward*, vol. ii, pp. 258-259; Brown, George W., *Baltimore and the 19th of April, 1861*, p. 91; Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. iii, pp. 553-555; Dix to McClellan; Dix to Seward, Sept. 11, 1861; McClellan to Banks, Sept. 12, 1861; Seward to McClellan, Oct. 28, 1861; Marcy to Banks, Oct. 29, 1861, McClellan MSS.; *O. R.*, ser. ii, vol. i, pp. 596-743, *passim*; ser. ii, vols. ii and iii, *passim*; McPherson, *History of the Rebellion*, pp. 152-153.

ing in the same state that he would go at once to the War Department on the subject of Nelson's wants and would spur on the officials there. And as if there were not already enough entangled in the Butler-Andrew imbroglio, Chase on October 26 asked the general to let him know what he was doing and proposing in Massachusetts.[1]

Throughout the summer and fall, Lincoln too was a frequent visitor at the department and its bureaus, attempting to meet the wants of all who solicited his aid—and they were legion. Cameron disappointed state executives and generals so often in giving them less than they needed or not replying at all that it became an all too common practice to write directly to the President, or have Congressmen place matters before him. When the latter called he heard their stories, gave them notes to be carried to Cameron or the bureau chiefs, or, as often happened, accompanied them to the department to make the case as strong as possible. In his eagerness to oblige and put forward a vast military machine he continued to accept regiments as rapidly as they were offered, or recommended to the Secretary that it be done. Similarly he exerted his influence to have others armed and equipped so they could move to the front. And he was ever solicitous and watchful of the requirements of those already in the field, interceding to have them well supplied so that suffering might be minimized and military movements made with all dispatch.

This persistent interference was certainly an embarrassment to the bureaus, but it seems plain that at least a part of the confusion which attended their work, and the shortcomings which resulted were in part due to improper internal functioning. The troubles attending the mustering of mili-

[1] R. Anderson to Chase, Sept. 1 and 18, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iv, pp. 255-256, 261; Chase to Sherman, Sept. 17, 1861; Chase to Nelson, Sept. 18, 1861, Schuckers, *Chase*, p. 429; Chase to Butler, Oct. 26, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 266.

tia out of the national service, a fitting finale to three months of privation, demonstrate the inefficiency of the Paymaster Bureau. Men hesitated to disband without being fully paid lest they never receive their due. In New York City the streets were filled with soldiers, loafing about, many of them suffering, waiting for their pay. In Ohio they were put off from day to day until they lost patience and threatened to mutiny. In Harrisburg they nearly mobbed the paymasters and were restrained only after a regiment had been called to resist them. Don Cameron wrote his father that "we shall have an ugly time if the men are not sent to their respective places of encampment and paymasters sent after them." The government appears to have had sufficient money to make the payments; the difficulty rested with the pay corps in distributing it. As a consequence of this unseemly delay, thousands of men who might have re-enlisted for three years went home to stay and to complain.[1]

August 16 Andrew complained to the adjutant-general that he was continually embarrassed by a want of information and directions as to what was expected of him. In matters of appointments to vacancies in regiments moved forward, he had received no information whatever from the Adjutant-General's Office. Yet at the time he wrote he had dispatches from seven Massachusetts commanders requesting him to appoint men to vacant places. This could only be done after the bureau had made official certification of the vacancy to him. Andrew suggested that copies of all general orders of the War Department be forwarded to the governors. Many of those already issued, he said, had materially affected his duties and the military business of the state, but in every instance except one he had had to find out for himself that

[1] *New York Herald*, Aug. 1, 1861; Foulke, *Morton*, vol. i, p. 127; J. D. Cameron to Cameron, July 27, 1861; Morgan to Cameron, Aug. 15, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 359, 415; Cameron to Larned, July 29, 1861, Military Book No. 45, MSS.

such orders had been issued and what they contained.[1] All of which was an indictment of the Adjutant-General's Office.

The daily complaints from the governors in all parts of the North and commanders scattered along the front or in state camps was testimony sufficient as to ordnance shortage. But added to the misfortune of a deficiency of arms and the difficulties of manufacturing them quickly in 1861 was the fact that the bureau was very often wanting in administrative efficiency. That cross-purposes were at work in the distribution of arms seems clear from a letter which the chief of ordnance wrote to Cameron on September 28. In this he stated that in complying with an order received from Cameron the day before, he had directed that several thousand muskets recently received be sent to Governor Morton from the New York Arsenal. The commander of the arsenal, however, telegraphed back that a large portion of the arms had just been issued to General Anderson in Kentucky as a result of a dispatch from the Secretary of War. Ripley said that this was his first intimation that the muskets had been ordered elsewhere. In consequence of this circumstance he could not supply Morton until new stocks of arms arrived.[2] On the same day that Ripley wrote, Cameron asked Governor Morgan to express, if possible, 5,000 muskets to Anderson, adding that they could be replaced within ten days from the New York Arsenal.[3]

Nowhere in the department bureaus, however, was inefficiency, inaction and confusion more amply displayed and more firmly entrenched than in the Medical Bureau. Since the beginning of the war it had carried on in its old-fashioned way and resisted the efforts of the more up-to-date Sanitary Commission to institute reform. As the year drew toward

[1] Andrew to Thomas, Aug. 16, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 419-420.

[2] Ripley to Cameron, Sept. 28, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 546.

[3] Cameron to Morgan, Sept. 28, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 546.

a close, however, the forces opposing it began to attack the fundamental difficulty, the seniority system, hoping that if younger men were given control, modern scientific methods and proper procedure would be invoked.[1] Frederick Law Olmsted said:

> . . . It is criminal weakness to intrust such important responsibilities as those resting on the surgeon-general to a self-satisfied, supercilious, bigoted block-head, merely because he is the oldest of the old mess-room doctors of the frontier-guard of the country. He knows nothing, and does nothing, and is capable of knowing nothing and doing nothing but quibble about matters of form and precedent, and sign his name to papers which require that ceremony to be performed before they can be admitted to eternal rest in the pigeonholes of the bureau.[2]

In sympathy with a radical change, McClellan summoned the head of the Sanitary Commission, Doctor Henry W. Bellows, and asked him to draft a bill for the reorganization of the bureau. When submitted the general endorsed it and accompanied Doctor Bellows to the President and to the War Department to ask their support. Cameron was "not at home," but Assistant Secretary Scott, "much the wiser man," heartily approved of it. At the suggestion of Lincoln and Scott the bill was then presented to the Senate by Senator Wilson. Bellows said:

> The bill strikes at all the senility and incompetency in the bureau and would put about eight first-class men, selected by the President out of the whole Medical Staff, into the control and management of affairs. It would lay on the shelf all the venerable do-nothings and senile obstructives that now vex the health and embarrass the safety of our troops. . . .[3]

[1] Forbes to Olmsted, Dec. 21, 1861, Hughes, *Forbes*, vol. i, p. 269; *New York Tribune*, Dec. 21, 1861.

[2] Olmsted to Forbes, Dec. 15, 1861, Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-266.

[3] Bellows to Forbes, Dec. 19, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 267-268.

Senator Wilson was in thorough sympathy with the change for, as he said in the debate on January 30, 1862, he had heard nothing but complaints about the Medical Bureau's performances, and the old men who were running it.[1] Senator Hale the same day added a touch of humor to the serious piece of business when he announced that he had it on good authority that there was a list of medicines prescribed by regulations which had been fixed upon thirty or forty years before. No matter what new light an army doctor might now have obtained by study, experience and observation, "if somebody was not put to death with that dose thirty years ago, he was not at liberty to administer it now."[2]

With pressure from the Commission, and the endorsement of McClellan, the President, Assistant Secretary Scott and interested Congressmen, the success of the reform bill was assured. On April 17, 1862, it received the approval of Lincoln.[3] Thus after a long, hard struggle the "old guard" in the bureau were routed and a more efficient system instituted.

The slow haphazard procedure which characterized the War Department's administration from the outset of war was, of course, extremely costly as well as fruitful of delay and inefficiency. Chase wrote John Sherman on October 1 that the "lack of system, organization and economy in the war expenditures makes it almost and I fear impossible to provide payment. There must be a check and reform or the worst may be apprehended financially."[4] In the same vein he wrote to General Sherman on the 13th, expressing the belief that if due economy and vigilance had been exercised from the beginning there would not in October be an excess of requisitions beyond the means of the government to pro-

[1] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 558.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Senate Journal*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 405.

[4] Chase to Sherman, Oct. 1, 1861, John Sherman MSS.

vide.[1] He was also fully cognizant of the increased financial burden which resulted from the dual system under which the government recruited and organized its forces. In all the states men were enlisted, armed, equipped, provisioned and transported almost without reference to the central powers. A vast duplication resulted and it was almost impossible to know the exact status of affairs at any given time.[2]

So exorbitant had the expenditures been during the past several months, and so skeptical was he of the War Department's new estimates, that the Secretary of the Treasury declined to submit the new figures to Congress. In returning them to Cameron he demanded that they be subjected to a more rigid scrutiny and a reasonably satisfactory explanation given for exceeding the discretionary authority which Congress had allowed. He reminded Cameron that he had heretofore objected, and now again objected, to rendering the national treasury liable for a billion dollars in addition to the existing debt, when proper system and economy could achieve the same results at half the cost. "The want of success of our armies, and the difficulties of our financial operations," said Chase, "have not been in consequence of a want or excess of men but for want of systematic administration."[3] These were cold, harsh words, but Chase was in a position to know the truth of them. His intimacy with Cameron at the time was such that he would hardly have exaggerated the situation.

But Chase was by no means original in bringing out these charges. They had been on the lips of men in public and private life for several months past, and the newspapers had been persistent in their denunciations and demands for Cameron's

[1] Chase to W. T. Sherman, Oct. 13, 1861, W. T. Sherman MSS.

[2] Chase to L. Anderson, Oct. 2, 1861, Schuckers, *Chase*, p. 430.

[3] Chase to Cameron, Nov. 27, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

removal. In August a storm of opposition broke loose against him and others in the Cabinet as well. Seward and Welles came in for a good share of it. The *New York Tribune* on August 22 reviewed a part of the assault by saying that the *Albany Journal* on the 12th attacked Welles; the *Herald* four days later endorsed the *Journal* article and attacked others in the Cabinet as unfit; the *New York World* on the 17th was for more determined action, and the *Boston Transcript* on the 19th wanted new men in the War and Navy Departments, claiming Cameron to be utterly lacking in executive capacity. The *New York Evening Express* on the 29th quoted the *Sun,* a Republican paper, as favoring the ousting of Cameron and Welles, and the substitution of "*honest Democrats.*"

The *Herald* on September 4 was of the opinion that the whole agitation was "a war of politicians exclusively," an attempt on the part of Chase's friends, acting through Greeley's paper, to discredit Seward, Cameron and others being used as a "blind," while Seward's friends retaliated by attacking Chase and Cameron. In this it was undoubtedly mistaken. Cameron was the main target in the assaults. From one end of the country to the other there was a profound and universal discontent with the movements of the War Department, and a distrust of its chief. John M. Forbes of Boston and William Cullen Bryant, anxious for a reorganization of the Cabinet, were for concentrating against Cameron. Bryant had no love for Seward but felt his dismissal was more than could be asked for and to agitate for it "might endanger the success of the scheme for getting rid of Cameron." He reported that the dissatisfaction with him was very great in New York, supposed it to be the same in Boston, and said he had heard in Washington everybody except Cameron's own friends and favorites were denouncing

him in the strongest terms.[1] Ebenezer Peck of Illinois frankly told Lincoln that Cameron ought to be put out because he was both corrupt and incompetent. A committee of New York and Boston bankers visited the President in August to tell him the same thing. Senator Trumbull in a letter to Senator Doolittle on August 31 denounced Cameron's jobbery and incompetency and ventured the opinion that his displacement by Joseph Holt would be equal to gaining a victory and would send government bonds up five per cent. in the market the moment the change was made.[2]

Cameron himself felt the adverse current and, it was said, expressed a readiness to leave the Cabinet. In a letter on September 24, admitting and deploring the defective organization of the War Department, Chase revealed in strict confidence the same thing. He said he knew that the Secretary wished to resign and go abroad, but he, Chase, was in a quandary as to who was fitted for the place.[3] This was the very same point that was giving trouble to many of the agitators and would-be Cabinet-makers. Holt seems to have been the most generally favored for the War Office but there appears to have been some uneasiness as to his slavery views. Bryant and Forbes discussed possible candidates in their correspondence but could reach no satisfactory and feasible choice. Forbes thought if Holt would not do, "we had better rub along as we are until the right man turns up."[4]

[1] Bryant to Forbes, Aug. 21, 1861, Hughes, *Forbes*, vol. i, pp. 236-237; *New York Times*, Aug. 28, 1861; *New York Daily News*, Aug. 29, 1861.

[2] Peck to Trumbull, Feb. 15, 1862, Trumbull MSS.; Trumbull to Doolittle, Aug. 31, 1861, *Illinois State Historical Society Journal*, vol. ii, no. 2, p. 49.

[3] J. Bowen to Bigelow, Sept. 4, 1861, Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. i, pp. 363-364; Chase to W. Gray, Sept. 18, 1861, Schuckers, *Chase*, p. 430.

[4] *New York Evening Express*, Aug. 30, 1861, quoting from the *Boston Transcript* and *New York Times*; Forbes to Bryant, Aug. 24, 1861; Bryant to Forbes, Aug. 27, 1861, Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

The President watched and listened while the rumblings went on. His position was difficult. Some of the charges appeared to him to be "the most unfounded gossip," and he was determined not to act upon them. The visiting bankers talked "very glibly," but they did not convince him. He promised them Cameron's "head" if they could bring him one proved case of the Secretary's dishonesty, but would yield on nothing less.[1] The circumstances surrounding the agitation were much the same as those at the time his appointment was under consideration—an abundance of charges of corruption, but with little or no support in specific facts. Had the President ousted Cameron to pacify the clamor it would have been giving sanction to every accusation of speculation and jobbery, disgraced the Secretary and laid the Executive open to similar stampeding against other Cabinet officers. And this he could not afford.

But the situation now was unlike that in January in that there was ample proof of Cameron's unfitness in matters of administration, and this Lincoln saw plainly. As has been shown, complaints from the governors and others were frequent, conflicts were ever present, confusion was rampant and military progress was evidently being retarded by a want of system, foresight and wisdom. That the President would have been glad to be relieved of his Secretary of War may well be surmised from Nicolay's "private paper" referring to a conversation with Lincoln, October 2. It states: "Cameron utterly ignorant and regardless of the course of things and probable result. Selfish and openly discourteous to the President. Obnoxious to the country. Incapable either of organizing details or conceiving and executing general plans." [2]

[1] Carpenter, F. B., *Six Months at the White House*, p. 252.

[2] Rhodes, James F., *History of the Civil War*, p. 84; Field, Maunsell B., *Memories of Many Men and Some Women*, p. 270.

But all things considered it was not easy to oust Cameron. And then, what man could be found who would satisfy the storming journalists, the bickering politicians, the exacting governors, the bankers, the bakers and candle-stick makers? Who could handle effectively the vast, intricate and detailed problems of War Department administration? It was difficult to say.

CHAPTER VIII

Military Railroads and Telegraphs

The military control of railroads neither in 1861 nor later in the war reached the proportions that it did in France in 1870, to say nothing of the vast integration and control in the United States in 1918. In 1861 the general policy of the government was to guide the activities of the northern roads in transporting troops and supplies, rather than to seize and operate them. As movements were made into enemy territory, however, the latter course was taken in the case of enemy lines. In 1862 a rather elaborate system of management was established for their administration.

It has already been mentioned that the exigencies of affairs in Maryland in April, 1861, necessitated the seizure for military purposes of the Annapolis and Elk Ridge Railroad and the section of the Baltimore and Ohio connecting the capital and the city of Baltimore. This was a temporary measure only and as soon as the government gained the upper hand in Baltimore and its environs the roads were restored to their owners.[1] In referring to the route from Philadelphia to Baltimore and Annapolis, General Patterson on May 8 declared that the relations of the federal authorities to railroad and steamship companies were the same "as heretofore existing", no control being exercised over their facilities except that the government determined the kind of passengers and supplies which were not to be transported and, by agreement, troops and supplies took precedence over other traffic.[2] Two weeks later, in order properly to correlate and direct the activities in all sections in behalf of the govern-

[1] *Vide*, pp. 127-128.

[2] Special Order No. 32, May 8, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. li, part i, p. 372.

ment, Thomas A. Scott was made general manager of military railroads and telegraphs and given general charge so far as the War Department was concerned.[1] In this capacity he controlled the roads temporarily seized and directed attention to the rapid movement of men and *matériel* over private lines. Cameron afterwards said that in less than a month Scott had so systematized his duties that he could tell the capacity for transportation toward every division of the army.[2]

As general manager of railroads Scott's labors covered a wide range. One of the first of his duties was the reconstruction of the damaged parts of the Northern Central road so that the troops moving from the West could be accomodated. A schedule of rates was drawn up and issued by him for the guidance of rail companies and military officers, and improvements of railroad communications were begun in the vicinity of Washington. To make direct connections with the Orange and Alexandria Railroad a line was built through the streets of Washington to the Long Bridge, and when the federal forces crossed the Potomac, possession was taken of the Alexandria, Hampshire and Loudoun and Orange and Alexandria Railroads, together with their depots, shops, machinery and other available property. Trackage, bridges and equipment were speedily restored to usefulness where injured when the enemy retired, and additional trackage, sidings and bridges constructed. In a short space of time Scott accomplished what some of the doting old army officers believed could not be done at all.[3]

In the execution of this work Scott had been materially

[1] Cameron's order, May 23, 1861, Letters Received File, 1861, MSS., Quartermaster Office, Fort Myer, Maryland.

[2] Wilson, William B., *History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company*, vol. ii, pp. 244-245.

[3] *Ibid.*

assisted by Captain R. F. Morley, who in civil life was president of the Allegheny Railroad. When Scott assumed the larger duties of Assistant Secretary of War and these became all-absorbing, Morley was given the management of the military railroads, and to facilitate his work was made a disbursing officer of the Quartermaster Bureau.[1] The construction work which devolved upon him was in large measure a continuance of that which Scott had begun. In fact, it appears as though Morley confined himself exclusively to this sort of work. His report of November 25 was given over almost entirely to a discussion of what had already been accomplished in building and rebuilding and to recommendations as to what ought to be done.[2] With the railroad companies giving hearty support and the War and Quartermaster Offices taking an active part in the direction of troop movements, it is probable that Morley was advised to confine himself to the mechanical aspects of the transportation problem.

Practically all that had been done thus far had been under the President's powers as commander-in-chief of the army. But it seems evident that Congress when it met at least tacitly approved of the steps taken. No objection was made to the early seizures and when in July Cameron declared that the supervision of railroads and telegraphs by the War Department would remain a necessity,[3] there was no protest. Funds requested for both were willingly appropriated. In December the President and Secretary laid before Congress suggestions for the extension of military authority over railroads.

[1] Cameron's order, Sept. 14, 1861, Military Railroad File, Miscellaneous Papers, MSS., Quartermaster Office, Fort Myer; O'Driscoll, "Sketch of the Military Railroads," MS., *ibid.*; T. A. Scott to Meigs, Sept. 24, 1861, Military Book No. 46, MSS.

[2] Morley to Cameron, Nov. 25, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 673-675.

[3] Cameron's report, July 1, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 307.

Cameron after reviewing the transportation situation recommended increases in trackage and various improvements to effect quick connections in and around Washington.[1] Lincoln proposed, as a military measure. that the loyal parts of eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina be connected with Kentucky and other loyal parts of the Union by railroads.[2]

In January, 1862, Congress took a step of great consequence when it passed an act authorizing the President to take possession of any and all roads and telegraph lines in the United States, and, if necessary, to operate them in the interest of the government.[3] It was the sort of discretionary power that was needed in order that these facilities might effectually support military movements and be of widest usefulness. Under the act, by order of the President, February 4, 1862, Stanton appointed Daniel C. McCallum as military director and superintendent of railroads and gave him full power to seize and use all equipment necessary for the government's transportation requirements.[4] But since the northern roads under private management were performing their duties satisfactorily, the policy of the previous year was, in the main, continued so far as they were concerned.[5]

Where many roads were in competition for the business of carrying troops and freight traffic, and where both the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of War were personally interested in railroad companies which were engaged in handling the government business, as was the case of Cameron and Scott, it is perhaps not surprising that charges of impro-

[1] Cameron's report, Dec. 1, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 705-706.

[2] Lincoln's message, Dec. 3, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 710-711.

[3] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 304-305; O'Driscoll, *op. cit.*

[4] Stanton's order, Feb. 4, 1862, Military Railroad File, *loc. cit.*

[5] O'Driscoll, *op. cit.*; Riegel, R. E., "Federal Operation of the Southern Railroads During the Civil War," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. ix, p. 129.

priety and favoritism were made against them. Accusations came from two sources: the roads competing with the Northern Central, the "Cameron road", and the Pennsylvania of which Scott was vice president; and from the Congressional Committee on Contracts. The former centered their opposition, of course, on the charge of favoritism. The latter seconded these and objected to the schedule of rates issued, claiming them to be excessively high.

One of the first roads to object to discrimination was the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore, of which Samuel M. Felton was the head. This line, in conjunction with the Camden and Amboy, was the shortest and most direct route from New York and New England to Baltimore and Washington. Between Pennsylvania and Baltimore it did a competing business with the Northern Central, the former running from Philadelphia, the latter from Harrisburg. When both lines suffered depredations in the vicinity of Baltimore in April, the first signs of discriminations began. Federal funds to the extent of $14,000 were advanced to repair the Northern Central quickly, but Felton's road was permitted only to make certain excess charges when handling government business to cover the cost of repairs.[1] In May it was observed that the Secretary was directing traffic over his own road, ordering on May 16, the New York Seventy-ninth to proceed to Washington *via* Harrisburg or by sea. Six days later he instructed Governor Sprague to forward the Second Rhode Island Volunteers by rail, *via* the New Jersey Central, East Pennsylvania, Lebanon and Northern Central roads.[2] When Felton learned of the routing of the New York regiment he became suspicious of Cameron's motives, for the distance from New York to Baltimore *via*

[1] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. xxvi; Scott to editor, undated, *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 1861.

[2] Cameron to Sprague, May 22, 1861, Military Book No. 44.

Harrisburg was ninety-three miles longer than the direct route. A saving of about seventy miles could be made by using the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore road between Philadelphia and Baltimore.[1] A more irritating step was taken in June when arrangements were made to dispatch an equal number of troops from the northeast over the two competing lines on the alleged ground that the direct route could handle only twenty-five carloads daily. When made aware of this the officials of the Camden and Amboy and Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore immediately refuted the charge of limited capacity, saying they could handle several times the load credited to them.[2] For a time protests and refutations seemed ineffective and the routing through Harrisburg continued, a quartermaster in New York receiving orders from the Secretary to use that route in forwarding regiments. But Felton would not be put down, and finally Thomas A. Scott and John Tucker visited him to settle the controversy. He informed them he would continue objecting until such time as the department rescinded the order given to the New York quartermaster and his road received assurances of fair treatment. His demands were met, the obnoxious order was countermanded and arrangements made for troops to practically choose their route.[3]

Cameron did not let the charges of impropriety go unanswered. In July he emphatically denied that he had ever interfered with troop movements in the interest of his company, saying he had "no earthly interest whatever in the decision relative to the movement of troops at any time." He contended that General Scott had controlled the forward-

[1] Felton to Draper, May 16, 1861, Union Defence Committee MSS.

[2] *Letter of the President of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad Company*, pp. 30-31.

[3] Felton to Butler, July 11, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 170; *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. 693-695.

ing and whenever regiments were sent by way of Harrisburg it had been solely due to the "urgent necessities connected with the successful prosecution of the war." [1] Plausible though the denial sounded, the revelations brought out later and the dispatches sent strongly contradict the Secretary.

The transporting *via* Harrisburg, however, was not without some justification. This route, although longer in point of distance, had the advantage of being a continuous route, requiring no break or interruption from Jersey City or Elizabethport where the troops embarked to the capital, whereas the direct route necessitated the use of two ferries, and the trans-shipment of bulky freight, horses and artillery. Again, from the standpoint of the government, the competition between two lines, barring favoritism and interference, was desirable in that it resulted in lower rates. There was also an advantage in having two military routes from the northeast in times of emergency, and the government was justified in encouraging both by a distribution of the patronage so that they would perfect their facilities as military routes.[2]

The Baltimore and Ohio was another road which claimed to have suffered at the hands of the War Department. The charges of disloyalty on the part of its officials formed the basis of this discrimination. As has been noticed, J. Edgar Thomson and Felton, acting as transportation agents of the department, in April declared that the road had denied the use of its lines in the forwarding of troops.[3] The most notable instance was its declining to carry certain troops and munitions from the West to protect the capital.[4] Almost

[1] Cameron to J. P. Jackson, July 12, 1861, Military Book No. 45.

[2] J. T. Johnston to Meigs, Aug. 21, 1861, Letters Received File, 1861, MSS., Quartermaster Office, Fort Myer; *New York Times*, Aug. 10, 1861.

[3] *Vide*, p. 127.

[4] Officials of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in testifying before the

immediately a boycott was instituted against the road. Under instructions from the government Governor Dennison about the first week in May prohibited the shipping of western products to Baltimore and Washington over the Baltimore and Ohio main road. Thereafter as long as Cameron was in the War Office, no army supplies were brought from the West over its lines, nor was any kind of freight after May 26.[1] Troops and supplies from this section were usually shipped over the Pennsylvania, Northern Central and connecting lines to Baltimore, and thence by the Washington branch of the Baltimore and Ohio to the capital. Had the latter's main line been running normally and without restrictions it is probable that a large proportion of the traffic from the West would have been directed over it. The route was shorter and the produce along the way cheaper because the blockade of the Mississippi River had restricted its access to markets.[2]

Committee on the Conduct of the War denied that their road had been disloyal at the opening of the war. They contended that the charge that the road had refused to carry troops had originated in the interest of rival lines. It was said that because of the extraordinary and unexpected demands in the East, the road found itself unable to furnish equipment for bringing men from the West. Governor Dennison in February, 1862, wrote President Garrett of the Baltimore and Ohio expressing his belief that the road had acted in good faith, and the Committee on the Conduct of the War in its report set forth the same view.

Thomas A. Scott rebutted the Committee findings, however, by stating that most of its evidence on this score and on other transportation matters had been derived from Baltimore and Ohio officials. This was in large measure true. Scott renewed the charges against the company and stated that it had demanded higher rates than those granted to other companies. He pointed out that a mass meeting in Baltimore on July 28, 1862, adopted a resolution to the effect that the controlling officers of the road and a large majority of the employes were notoriously, and some of them avowedly disloyal. *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. xxvi, 614 *et seq.*; Scott to editor, undated, *New York Times*, Aug. 16, 1862.

[1] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. 454.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455.

Before the boycott rates on all the western roads were the same, due in part to agreements between the companies and in part to competition. With the cutting off of competition, however, rates soared wherever possible, resulting in increased revenues to the roads and inflated prices in the eastern markets. The government itself became a victim of its own folly, for the prices at which it was obliged to contract were often far in excess of what they would otherwise have been. In December when the best grades of flour were being quoted in Cincinnati papers at $3.90 to $4.10 a barrel, the government contracted for 30,000 barrels, delivered in Washington, at $7.50 each.[1]

In the matter of rates scheduled by the War Department to govern transportation costs, the government was again affected adversely. On July 12 Scott, as general manager of military railroads, issued a card of rates to be used as a "general basis" in settling with the rail companies for carrying troops, baggage, munitions and army supplies. Troops were to be moved at the rate of two cents per mile for each man; equipment, munitions and supplies accompanying regiments were to be shipped at first-class local rates, certain "average" rates being specified according to distance. For supplies forwarded by freight trains, other local rates were fixed, and regulations laid down as to the transportation of horses.[2]

The schedule drawn was faulty in two respects: first, it certainly conveyed the impression that the rates specified were fixed ones to be used in transactions with the railroads, and secondly, the local rates allowed increased unnecessarily the cost of transportation. Scott and Cameron subsequently contended that the tariffs specified were intended to be used

[1] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. 455-457.

[2] Scott to Sibley, July 12, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 325-326.

only as a maximum, above which no company should charge, and where the roads carried commodities for private individuals and business houses at lower figures, they must accord the government the same rates.[1] There was nothing in the schedule, however, to indicate these facts, and for some time quartermasters, railroad officials and regimental officers bargained for transportation in accordance with the specifications.[2] The result of the misunderstanding was large profits from excessive charges and deplorable abuses by unscrupulous men. A commission appointed to examine claims connected with railroad transportation informed Cameron in December that the freight rates established by the circular for the railroads "are materially higher than their ordinary 'through freight', and that the fare at two cents per mile for transporting large bodies of men is very profitable." In one case a difference of about $20,000 was proved against the government in a claim of $51,000, and in another the transportation of horses "per car", as stipulated by the circular, brought the company a return of eighty per cent over the charge to private customers.[3] So lucrative was the railroad business under the existing circumstances, that regimental officers were often able to play off the companies against each other, troops being sent over the line that paid the officers the biggest bonus.[4]

The Committee on Contracts was especially caustic against the allowing of local rates on long hauls and the improper practices accompanying it. It seemed altogether likely that even if such rates had not been granted the business would have been sufficiently profitable because of its volume that

[1] Cameron to Holt *et al.*, Dec. 20, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 751-752; *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. xxix, lii-liii.

[3] Davis *et al.* to Cameron, Dec. 17, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, p. 749.

[4] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. liii.

companies would have sought it eagerly. With local rates, the government, it was estimated, paid at least thirty-three and one-third per cent more than private parties.[1] Why such rates were allowed when it must have been anticipated that the vast proportion of the government traffic would be "through transportation", was difficult for the committee members to understand.

They observed and denounced a practice resorted to which put aside all dispute as to whether certain traffic was local or not. This concerned the transporting of beef cattle from the West. Contracts were made for their delivery in Harrisburg; from there they were shipped to the capital at government expense. The effect of this arrangment, said the Committee, was to make the freight local on the Pennsylvania from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg, and again local from that point. Had the cattle been shipped directly from Pittsburgh the freight would "be what are denominated through freights." [2]

That there was much that was unwise and some things which were improper in the railroad administration cannot be gainsaid. The Committee on Contracts had just grounds for complaint, but very frequently they resorted to mere

[1] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. xviii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xx. In denouncing the system of local rates the Committee said: "... There is no possible excuse for allowing *local rates*, when persons less conversant with the subject than the Secretary of War or Mr. Scott must have known that through transportation would be almost universal, unless, indeed, as in the shipment of cattle and horses to Harrisburg, and then their reshipment to Baltimore, the avarice of public officials overrode the public welfare." *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

The report of the Pennsylvania Railroad on February 3, 1862, showed that the net earnings of the road for the preceding year had increased forty per cent. Those of the Northern Central had nearly doubled. *Ibid.*, p. xix. Scott declared that the Pennsylvania Railroad's total receipts from the government did not reach four and three-fourths per cent of the gross receipts of the road. Scott to editor, undated, *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 1862.

fault-finding and appear to have been prejudiced to no small degree. Too often they saw only points of weakness and overlooked or neglected to give credit where it was due. In the quiet of a committee room, free from the burdens and responsibilities of administration, it was not hard to see what ought to have been done, and, after hearing witnesses testify, tell what should not have been done, and wherein men were corrupt or had blundered. It was easy to declare that the Quartermaster Bureau should have been permitted to manage the whole transportation problem, and that Cameron and Scott, being interested parties, should have kept clear of it. But in so saying the members seemed to forget that the bureau was almost overwhelmed already with the business in hand, and they failed to place any value upon the long experience of Cameron and Scott in railroad administration. Many things that these men had done were undoubtedly of great value, particularly Scott's organizing work in the first few months of the war. The truth of the matter is that the bureau's inability to do more was in large measure due to the fact that the body of which the Committee were members had itself failed to make proper provisions to meet the storm which they and all others saw was clearly approaching. Had they met their own responsibilities fully and fearlessly and impartially, there might not have been so many shortcomings in the executive bureaus and departments.

In the first few months of the war some advance was made in developing the military telegraph, but it was largely through the efforts and energy of Edward S. Sanford and the generosity of the American Telegraph Company of which he was the president.[1] The government appears to have had little or no funds for telegraphic construction, and manifested a surprising indifference as to the value of the telegraph for military purposes. A semblance of authority was assumed

[1] Bates, *Lincoln and the Military Telegraph Office*, pp. 35-36.

over such private lines as necessity and occasion demanded, and in his July report Cameron declared a supervision over telegraph lines would "remain a necessity, to be met by the Department," but this surveillance was of rather little importance until after the Bull Run campaign.[1] Although Scott was made general manager of the military telegraph in May, his railroad duties appear to have taken most of his time. Sanford apparently acted unofficially in his place until August.[2]

Deficient telegraphic communication was plainly in evidence during the Bull Run campaign. In the trying days between July 17 and 22, there were no adequate means of communication between Patterson and the War Department. The general's first news of McDowell's defeat reached him three days after the event, and then through a Philadelphia newspaper.[3] McDowell had no telegraphic facilities beyond Fairfax Court House, and from that point kept the authorities in Washington advised of his movement.[4] The Executive Mansion was without any equipment and the President was obliged to receive messages through the War Office, or go there to read them.[5] Efforts of the chief signal officer of the army, Albert J. Myer, to obtain funds for telegraphic apparatus seemed to meet with little favor from Cameron. An estimate submitted on June 27 by Myer for

[1] Cameron's report, July 1, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 307.

[2] Plum, *The Military Telegraph During the Civil War*, vol. i, p. 62; Sanford to B. P. Snyder and G. H. Burns, Aug. 9, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 394-395.

[3] Plum, *op. cit.*, p. 74. The station nearest to Patterson was at Harper's Ferry.

[4] *The New Era*, Nov. 21, 1861, a newspaper clipping in J. W. Schuckers MSS.

[5] Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 3, footnote. Bates, who was in the telegraph office at the time, says Lincoln spent more of his waking hours there than in any other place except the White House.

the sum of $10,000 for movable electric telegraphs was not referred to Congress and at Bull Run there was none at all. A similar suggestion made August 6, approved by both McDowell and McClellan, was pigeon-holed in the Secretary's office.[1]

As the months passed on, however, advances were made partly through the direction of Thomas A. Scott, with the assistance of Sanford, and partly through the efforts of appointees in various sections. Frémont organized his own corps for the construction and operation of lines, and in September Assistant Secretary Scott ordered General Anderson to authorize Anson Stager, general manager of the telegraph in the West, to extend his charge over the lines in Kentucky. But there was no general cooperation or correlation of effort among such officers, either in administration or in construction.[2] The cost of work done varied widely without just cause. Frémont was building lines in Missouri by contract at $100 per mile, while work in the mountain regions in western Virginia was costing about $45 per mile.[3] McClellan in the fall of 1861 was anxious to have all the armies in all sections acting together, and to do this there was need of a centralized telegraphic bureau under a competent, active and experienced chief. Scott's duties as Assistant Secretary prevented him from carrying on the enlarged labors of such a bureau, and so Anson Stager was called to Washington.[4]

On October 26 Stager submitted a carefully considered plan of unification. It provided for a bureau to be organized

[1] A. J. Myer to Cameron, Aug. 1, 1861; Nov. 30, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 375-376, 697.

[2] Plum, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114; Scott to Anderson, Sept. 24, 1861, Military Book No. 46, MSS.

[3] Plum, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[4] *Ibid.*

under the direction of the Secretary of War with a general manager who should, with the Secretary's advice and approval, purchase, transport and distribute all materials required in the construction, maintainance and operation of the military telegraph lines. The manager was to appoint an assistant for each military department and select other employes for the service. Requisitions upon quartermasters were to be honored and bills were to be paid by them when certified by the general manager. The manager was also to arrange with private companies for the use of their lines and offices on special occasions. To this point Scott added: "In case of emergency the General Manager shall take possession of any of the telegraph lines that may be required for public service." This program, with Lincoln's sanction, was approved by Cameron.[1] Stager became the bureau chief, at first without army rank, but at the insistence of Meigs he was made an assistant quartermaster with the rank of captain. Otherwise, Meigs contended, Stager's requisitions for money and supplies could not be honored.[2] On November 25, by a special order, the new manager was assigned to duty.[3] Funds for such a bureau had been appropriated at the special session of Congress, so that the work of organization was not retarded. The work begun by Sanford, Scott and the few expert telegraphers brought from Pennsylvania to Washington served as a basis for the new bureau, and to this little group must go the credit for inaugurating what became a celebrated telegraph corps.[4]

No effective system of censorship was devised during the first year of the war, and such efforts as were made in this direction were largely those which came through the State

[1] Plum, pp. 128-129.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

[3] Special Order No. 313, Nov. 25, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 672.

[4] Wilson, William B., *A few Acts and Actors in the Tragedy of the Civil War in the United States*, pp. 97-98; Bates, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

Department.[1] Prior to the date set for the movement on Manassas, almost nothing had been done by the War Department to restrain the diffusion of information, but on July 8, with the sanction of Cameron, General Scott ordered that the telegraph should convey no dispatches concerning military operations except those permitted by himself.[2] That such action was necessary may be seen from the fact that on that very morning the *New York Tribune* published a statement from its Washington correspondent announcing that a forward movement would be made that day. Soon after McClellan took command of the Army of the Potomac an agreement was entered into between himself and the representatives of the press for the guidance of newspapers. It resolved that all editors in the loyal states and in the District of Columbia "be requested to refrain from publishing, either as editorial or as correspondence of any description or from any point, any matter that may furnish aid and comfort to the enemy." The government was requested to afford facilities for obtaining and immediately transmitting all information suitable for publishing. The carrying out of this censorship was entrusted to the State Department, Seward and his son supervising, and H. E. Thayer acting as the censor.[3]

From the standpoint of the press the censorship became unduly harsh, completely disregarding the agreement entered into, and yet it was quite ineffective. In October orders were given to the censor to prohibit "for the present . . . all telegraphic dispatches from Washington, intended for publi-

[1] *House Report* No. 64, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 1. For a short time at the beginning of the war, censorship seems to have been under the control of the Treasury Department, and then under the War Department, but, like many other tasks of a miscellaneous character, it was seized upon by the energetic Seward and managed by his department until Stanton took over the War Office.

[2] Scott's order, July 8, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 324.

[3] Flower, Frank Abiel, *Edwin McMaster Stanton*, p. 216; *House Report* No. 64, *loc. cit.*, pp. 1-3.

cation which relate to the *civil* or military operations of the government, with the exception of dispatches of the regular agent of the associated press, or other dispatches which contain the same facts." Nothing damaging to the character of the administration, Cabinet or military officers was permitted to be sent from Washington over the wires.[1] But at the same time no adequate measures seem to have been taken to prevent the transmission of " contraband " news through the telegraph offices of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York or other important cities. Nor was the censorship of mails attempted, and so news suppressed in Washington could easily be forwarded to northern cities. Many suppressed dispatches were sent in this way, especially those not concerning military events.[2]

Not until Edwin M. Stanton became Secretary of War were effective measures instituted. Believing that the censorship was a military function and should be under the War Department's management and control, he promptly demanded that it be re-transferred from Seward's department. The change was made and the entire military telegraph headquarters placed in an office next to the Secretary's own rooms.[3] On February 25 Stanton promulgated an order, sweeping and drastic, which was the keynote of a new order of things. Military possession was taken of all telegraph lines and communications not expressly authorized were forbidden. Newspapers publishing unauthorized military news were to be severely chastised. Sanford was designated military supervisor of telegraph messages, and Stager military superintendent in control of all lines and offices.[4] Over the whole Stanton ruled like a czar, ruthlessly scorning rank and station.

[1] *House Report* No. 64, *loc. cit.*, pp. 2-3, 4-5.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[3] Flower, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 208; Stanton's order, Feb. 25, 1862, Stanton MSS.

CHAPTER IX

Domestic Contracts and Frauds

The long years of neglect of the military and the pressure of the immediate demands of war were the fundamental causes for the extraordinary means resorted to in arming, equipping and supplying the hosts of northern soldiers in 1861. The failure of Congress in the days preceding hostilities properly to man the bureaus and to provide even a modicum of equipment and modern weapons in excess of what was required for the undersized peace-time military establishment, as we have seen, forced the government in the spring to rush into the open market, rely upon a variety of agencies for purchasing, and obtain what it could at prices laid down by manufacturers and middle-men. Carefully drawn legislative enactments, some of them a half-century old, regulating the manner of buying were flung to the winds in the first flush of war, and were slow in returning. Governors, specially designated agents and "lesser breeds without the law" were all active in furnishing the raw recruits.

In spite of all their efforts, however, and those of the bureaus as well, the arms and supplies of various kinds continued to be insufficient to meet the deluge of requisitions. Difficulties and shortcomings in the bureaus and the inability of the government to foresee at an early date the scope of the rebellion and contract accordingly retarded progress. Again, the authorized increase of the army in July and the subsequent acceptance of numbers even in excess of this, upset all previous calculations. The Ordnance Bureau had

figured upon an army of 250,000; the quartermaster general upon 300,000 men.[1]

To overcome these shortages was a real problem. As before, state aid was gladly welcomed. Authorizations to governors were freely given upon request, and in the many cases where they acted first and informed the War Department afterwards, their obligations were assumed.[2] State pride, lack of confidence in the department officials and a determination not to see their troops in want and suffering were incentives to this activity. In August a federal ordnance officer in New York was ordered to buy all the arms that could be had; General Ripley in Washington was instructed to receive all arms offered; Schuyler was sent on a belated trip to Europe to scour the market there, and the ministers and consuls resident there applied themselves in the same direction.[3] At the same time Secretary Cameron either contracted himself or directed Ripley to sign for vast quantities of arms offered to the department.[4] As a result of these combined efforts nearly two million muskets and rifles were contracted for between August 12, 1861 and January 10, 1862.[5]

[1] Ripley to Cameron, June 3, 1861, *House Exec. Doc.* No. 67, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 29; Meigs to Cameron, Oct. 30, 1861, Letters and Reports to the Secretary of War, No. 5, MSS., Quartermaster Office, Fort Myer.

[2] Cameron to Morton, Aug. 19, 1861; T. A. Scott to Morton, Sept. 27, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS.; Scott to Morton, Aug. 31, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 474; Andrew to Cameron, Oct. 11, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 572; Scott to Morgan, Nov. 23, 1861, Military Book No. 47, MSS.; Appletons' *Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1861, p. 252; *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 35; *New York Herald*, Jan. 8, 1862.

[3] T. A. Scott to Chase, Aug. 8, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 391; Scott to Ripley, Aug. 27, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861; *New York Herald*, May 8, 1862; Scott to J. Gage, Sept. 23, 1861, Military Book No. 46.

[4] Ordnance Files, 1861, *passim.*

[5] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 67, *loc. cit.*, pp. 33-35.

Meigs and his assistants in the North and West were also contracting on a grand scale, taking whatever suitable clothing and equipment that could be had. In addition generals and quartermasters with the armies were busy supplying immediate needs, their arrangements being forwarded to the Quartermaster Office for confirmation. The variety and great quantity of supplies to be obtained, the scattered location of markets and their distance from Washington made it altogether impracticable for all the negotiating to be done directly by the Quartermaster headquarters or even by its principal depots in the large cities. The extent of the buying was far beyond any peace-time estimates and calculations and the strict adherence to all the formulas laid down by Congress was impossible. When in the special session, a new bill was presented to fetter the making of contracts with new regulations, Meigs wrote Senator Wilson that if it were passed "the country may as well yield to the Southern rebels all they ask." He was exerting surveillance over the entire business and was confident public interests were being served best under the present system. Every purchase or order to purchase or deliver, if accepted, was a contract. The orders were telegraphed, contracts being closed with persons a thousand miles away.[1]

Workshops of every description that could turn out army stores were set going to furnish the hundreds of different articles needed for armies in camp and field. Factories were pushed to the limit of their capacities to provide clothing for over a half million men. As he anxiously watched their efforts and output, however, Meigs had little confidence in the ability of the domestic factories to supply the enlarged force and feared there was neither enough wool nor indigo in the country to make the requisite amount of cloth.[2] On October

[1] Meigs to H. Wilson, Aug. 2, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 378-379.

[2] Meigs to Cameron, Oct. 30, 1861, Letters and Reports to the Secretary of War, No. 5, MSS., *loc. cit.*

22 he informed Cameron that even if 150,000 suits of clothing, overcoats, coats and pantaloons were placed immediately in the government depot, they would scarcely supply the calls on hand. It was certain that there would be no surplus. In some places troops were obliged to do guard duty on cold nights without even coats, wearing their summer flannel blouses.[1] Attempts to obtain large quantities of blankets in the Philadelphia, New York and New England markets disclosed that few were available. It was believed that they had been bought up and stored away by speculators in the hope of higher prices later on.[2]

Despairing of a sufficiency in the home markets, Meigs turned his thoughts to supplementing the stocks from Europe.[3] He gave large orders to American firms for blankets and cloth which they in turn obtained from abroad, one company importing 200,000 blankets for government use.[4] In January and February, 1862, these orders began to bear fruit in substantial importations.[5] As a further step in tapping the foreign sources, Colonel Charles Thomas, assistant quartermaster and George P. Smith, special agent of the bureau, were sent to England and the continent to purchase fabrics, Ministers Charles Francis Adams and William L. Dayton being requested to afford them all possible aid in the satisfactory accomplishment of their task.[6]

No sooner did knowledge of this mission become public

[1] Meigs to Cameron, Oct. 22, 1861, *ibid.*

[2] *New York Herald*, Oct. 21, 1861.

[3] One order had been placed in Europe prior to this time. On August 9, through Minister Dayton, Meigs contracted for a complete equipment for 10,000 men, these to be uniformed as *chasseurs à pied*. Meigs to W. S. Pennington, Aug. 9, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 393.

[4] T. A. Scott to Chase, Oct. 15, 1861; Scott to Meigs, Oct. 16, 1861, Military Book No. 46.

[5] Military Book No. 47, *passim.*

[6] Scott to Adams and to Dayton, Oct. 21, 1861, *ibid.*, No. 46.

than the Boston Board of Trade and the bankers of that city set themselves in opposition. Unfortunately, the press erred in its estimates of the proposed expenditures, some papers stating a credit of $25,000,000 had been sent out; others reported the amount to be $60,000,000. Actually the total sum to be spent by the agents was $800,000, and the purchases were to be only for the instant and pressing wants of the service.[1] On the basis of such misinformation as it had, a committee of the Boston Board of Trade drew up a long communication requesting the annulment of the orders of the agents, and sent it off on October 18 by a special bearer who was to present it to Secretary Cameron and act as the organization's agent in the capital. Two principal grounds were set forth to justify their request. First, the financial engagements entered into between the government and the associated banks of New York, Philadelphia and Boston would be adversely affected if the specie which they freely advanced was sent to Europe for numerous purchases. The Secretary was reminded that if the policy were persisted in, the banks would be obliged to abandon the loan system, government securities would be distrusted, individual subscriptions would stop and in place of the present confidence and prosperity, confusion and panic would reign. Secondly, they believed in justice to the splendid efforts being manifested on all sides at home, the domestic market should be relied upon. They had no doubt but that all requirements could be met, now that machinery had been altered or replaced and factories were running night and day. It was predicted that by December 1, 400,000 men could be uniformed completely, and an equal number every six weeks thereafter.[2] To em-

[1] Meigs to Cameron, Oct. 22, 1861, *loc. cit.*; *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1861.

[2] C. G. Nazro to Cameron; Nazro *et al.* to Cameron, Oct. 18, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 583-586.

phasize the financial argument and bring it directly to the attention of Secretary Chase, the Board itself by a special vote directed a telegram to be dispatched to him the same day. The order, it was said, had created great excitement among the merchants and bankers and they felt it would have a very injurious effect upon the financial prospects of the government.[1]

Meigs remained unconvinced as to the potential output of American manufactories and informed Cameron that the order ought not to be revoked. He did say, however, that if these firms were able to furnish regulation cloth before fabric could be imported it would be accepted at any reasonable price, and the foreign goods laid aside for a "rainy day."[2] That the quartermaster-general was more nearly correct than the petitioners is evidenced from the fact that shortages continued, prices remained excessive and difficulties in the domestic factories remained. Apparently the imported stocks were never stored away.

The task of the Commissary Bureau was a quite different and somewhat less perplexing one. Its problems were great in the spring of 1861 due to the temporary isolation of the capital and the congestion on the railroads, but as these matters were remedied and the bureau personnel grew in size and commissary officers became more experienced, its difficulties decreased. The United States being a large agricultural nation was able to supply vast quantities of food-stuffs and beef cattle to its armies. Commissary officers usually contracted by advertising for bids and, when possible, obtained supplies in the vicinity where troops were located. In the Department of the West stores were obtained principally in St. Louis; troops in western Virginia were generally supplied

[1] E. Lincoln to Chase, Oct. 18, 1861, Chase MSS.

[2] Meigs to Cameron, Oct. 22, 1861, *loc. cit.; New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1861.

from Cincinnati, those in Kentucky from the same city and Louisville, and those near Washington from markets in Baltimore and New York.[1] It was the opinion of the commissary-general that no army of equal size had ever before been so well provisioned with subsistence as was the federal force in 1861, and this, in spite of the fact that the Commissary, like the Quartermaster and Ordnance Bureaus, suffered considerably from the ignorance and inexperience of its new officers.[2]

Where so large an amount of purchasing and contracting was being done by a variety of agencies, under pressure, and with rules and regulations suspended to a varying degree, it was inevitable that graft, fraud and inadvisable transactions should occur. And they most assuredly did. The suspension of safeguards in contracting and rumors of abuses spread quickly during the spring months. The attention of Congress was called to them and movements for investigations were begun. On July 12 and 17 resolutions were passed in the Senate calling upon Secretary Cameron for specific information on contracts made since March 4. In neither instance did he reply.[3] The efforts of the House were more successful. As a result of a resolution offered by Representative Van Wyck, and amended by Holman, a committee was appointed to make an "inquiry into all the facts and circumstances of all contracts and agreements already made and such contracts and agreements hereafter to be made prior to the final report of the committee. . . ."[4] This was the famous Committee on Contracts of which Van Wyck was chairman.

[1] Report of commissary-general, Nov. 26, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 676-678.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 308.

[4] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 137-138.

In the course of its work it left no stone unturned; a multitude of witnesses were called; contracts, engagements, systems and practices of all sorts were investigated, and in due season a report returned scathingly condemnatory of the Secretary of War and his administration. Its basic objections were that rules and regulations had not been adhered to, nor the letter of the law followed in carrying on departmental business. It believed that if all the contracting and purchasing had been done by the proper bureau officials and if the system of advertising for bids had been used in negotiating for *matériel* there would never have been such reprehensible actions and deals as were disclosed. The competition that went on between federal and state agents and others was denounced as having encouraged a brokerage business "as unprincipled and dishonest, as unfriendly to the success and welfare of the nation, as the plotting of actual treason." [1] The government had been the victim of conspiracies and the public treasury made a source of plunder. Major Hagner, the ordnance officer in New York, illustrated the absurdity and viciousness of the prevailing methods by pointing out that at times when he was negotiating for the purchase of arms, they were sold at higher prices to agents from states, cities or military commanders. And of course the central government had to pay the bills in the end. Because of this foolish situation and the belief that men were gambling in arms, Hagner requested the War Department to constitute a bureau of purchase in New York, and urged the necessity of restraining the states from sending agents into the market.[2]

After examining the effects of the system, the Committee proposed a similar remedy. Near the end of September it suggested to the War Department that the only effective way to check the abuses was to confine the purchasing of arms to

[1] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 34.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

a single bureau. This suggestion was to some extent followed, the work soon being centered in the War Department.[1] On November 25 Cameron sent letters to all of the governors requesting them to withdraw their agents because it had been found that the competition was "highly detrimental to the public service."[2]

Whether irregularities of procedure should have been countenanced in order to obtain large quantities of supplies quickly, or whether rules and regulations should have been strictly adhered to and a certain amount of delay suffered, will probably always remain a moot question. In justification of the former course it must be recognized that since the Ordnance and Quartermaster Bureaus were at no time in 1861 adequately manned with trained officers, it was altogether likely that delay would have resulted, the chafing of state officials would have been increased, and popular enthusiasm diminished. The chiefs confessed themselves pressed at all times to the utmost of their energies, and, under the conditions existing, their bureaus were almost overwhelmed with labor. That a greater degree of regularity could have been maintained and many of the abuses obviated by reasonable care can hardly be denied, but it should not be overlooked, as the Committee generally did, that the obtaining of arms and supplies in the early months of the war was of far greater consequence to the governors, the administration and the cause than questions of price or method.[3]

In considering the acquisition of *matériel* in 1861, it should

[1] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 35-36. Much of the arms purchasing in the fall and winter was done by Cameron himself or under orders from him.

[2] Cameron to governors, Nov. 25, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 675-676.

[3] When in October, 1861, the Ordnance Bureau refused to buy certain arms for the New York troops on the ground that the price was too high there was considerable indignation in the state. *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 1861.

be remembered that there were two classes of purchases or contracts, one for immediate, the other for future, delivery. The efforts of the governors and their agents were concerned with the former [1]—the arming, clothing and supplying of men so that they might move rapidly to the capital or the front, or be fitted out for training in the camps. The department demonstrated from the first its inability to meet all requisitions, for immediate delivery and there was nothing for it to do but give rein to the willing efforts of the states. Necessity overrode the law.

With contracts for future delivery the situation was quite different. Here such haste was not necessary and there was no excuse for any except those legally authorized to engage in making them, nor was there reason to disregard the customary rule of advertising for bids. Yet the Secretary of War, the Ordnance Bureau officials and others did engage in irregular contracting for futures. For this they deserved to be and were severely condemned. The practice was conducive to the growth of a class of middle-men, usually speculators and adventurers; it permitted rank demonstrations of favoritism and resulted in some of the worst frauds of the year. Indeed, the findings of the Committee on Contracts and a Commission on Ordnance and Ordnance Stores [2] seemed to indicate that many of the most outrageous abuses occurred not as a result of competitive purchasing between governors' agents, bureau agents and others, but in direct negotiations with private parties where official representatives were not in competition. These were generally for future

[1] An exception to this was the contracting in Europe. There arrangements were made for both immediate and future deliveries. *Vide*, chap. x.

[2] The Commission on Ordnance and Ordnance Stores consisted of Joseph Holt, Robert Dale Owen and Major P. V. Hagner. It was authorized "to audit and adjust all contracts, orders and claims on the War Department in respect to ordnance, arms and ammunition." Its report was made July 1, 1862. *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 72, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess.

delivery and in most cases this contracting was done in the late summer and autumn when the competitive purchasing of agents was on the wane.

Abuses were revealed in the negotiations for a great variety of war supplies, but perhaps the most flagrant cases occurred in the deals for arms, horses and vessels for transportation purposes. In these the evils resulting from failure to adhere to regulations were strikingly brought out. The Commission on Ordnance and Ordnance Stores, appointed by Secretary Stanton in 1862 to audit and adjust all contracts, orders and claims respecting ordnance, arms and ammunition, disclosed an instance in which the chief of ordnance on October 16 issued to a middle-man acting for an arms company a contract for 5,000 pistols at $20 each. For his services the agent received $10,000. On October 25 when the firm sought to contract directly for 10,000 weapons of the same kind, the chief declined on the ground that they were not serviceable for the army. Yet "a week or two" later when another well-known middle-man was called in, a contract for 5,000 of the pistols was obtained. The price agreed upon was $20, the agent receiving a commission of $2 per arm.[1] In another case investigated it was found that

[1] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. lxxxii-lxxxiii. The case of the *Providence Tool Company* v. *Norris* reveals Cameron in a very odious light in connection with one of the middle-men. Norris obtained from the tool company an order to contract with the Washington authorities for 25,000 muskets at $20 each. He then proceeded to the capital and began "concentrating influence at the War Department." He effected an "influential introduction" to Cameron and obtained from him "a very profitable contract." Upon being thanked, the Secretary expressed the hope that Norris "would make a great deal of money out of it." But the agent got nothing for his efforts as a dispute arose with the company as to the terms of the agreement. He alleged he was to receive $3 per gun, a total of $75,000. The company on the other hand contended he was to receive a "liberal compensation" in case of success. The case was finally settled in the Supreme Court of the United States in favor of the latter.

Justice Field's opinion which discussed the rule of public policy in

in October when E. Remington and Sons sought an order for revolvers they could procure a contract for 5,000 only at $15, while Colt at the same time, offering a weapon in no respect superior, was able to obtain a contract for an indefinite number at a $25 rate. Up to the time of the Commission's inquiry, 31,000 had been sold to the government. Subsequently, in soliciting a further contract under the competitive bidding system, Colt offered the same revolver for $14.50. This shows that the former price of $25 was far in excess of the reasonable sale price, and that the government was charged $325,500 beyond the full value of the arms received.[1]

In all, one hundred and four cases were considered by the Commission, involving about $50,000,000. By the rejection of some claims and contracts, the curtailment and modification of others and by reductions of prices when found excessive, the Commission saved the government nearly $17,000,000. It declared that it was to the persistent disregard of the law requiring bids that speculators and middlemen dealing in arms owed their "saturnalia of success."

letting government contracts is most significant in the light of the department's prevailing methods in regard to arms contracts. He said: "All contracts for supplies should be made with those, and with those only, who will execute them most faithfully, and at the least expense to the Government. Considerations as to the most efficient and economical mode of meeting the public wants should alone control, in this respect, the actions of every department of the Government. No other consideration can lawfully enter into the transaction so far as the Government is concerned. Such is the rule of public policy; and whatever tends to introduce any other element into the transaction is against public policy. That agreements, like the one under consideration, have this tendency, is manifest. They tend to introduce personal solicitation, and personal influence, as elements in the procurement of contracts; and thus directly lead to inefficiency in the public service, and to unnecessary expenditures of public funds." *U. S. Reports*, 2 Wall. 45.

The writer is indebted to Professor J. G. Randall of the University of Illinois for calling his attention to this case.

[1] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. lxxxi.

That there was no pressing exigency and therefore no excuse for brushing aside regulations was proven by the fact that all contracts for domestic arms provided for deliveries at distant periods of time.[1]

Scandals in horse contracts were equally bad or even worse. Dawes, a member of the Committee on Contracts, indicated the extent of these contracts and the abuses connected with them when he declared:

> . . . Horse contracts have been so plentiful that Government officials have gone about the streets with their pockets filled with them, and with which they make presents to the clergymen of their parishes. Some of these contracts have served to heal old political sores, and cure bitter political feuds; and the telegraph announced that high public functionaries have graced with their presence the love feasts which were got up to celebrate political reconciliations thus brought about—where the hatchet of political animosity is buried in the grave of public confidence and the national credit is crucified between malefactors.[2]

Testimony taken in Chicago, Indianapolis and Cincinnati showed that the government had been defrauded in all sections.[3] In September upon direct orders from the Secretary of War, Meigs gave contracts to two Pennsylvanians for 1,000 cavalry horses deliverable at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. The price was $117 at that place. These contractors, acting as middle-men, then bought available horses to fill the order. It was estimated that the average price paid by them could not have exceeded $75, while a large number were believed to have cost from $30 to $60. Many of the horses, it was said, would have been high priced at $30. About one-third of the

[1] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. lxxvii, lxxxi.

[2] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 298.

[3] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. lvi.

entire lot were utterly worthless for military purposes. So gross was the whole performance in furnishing and inspecting that the people of Huntingdon entered a vigorous protest. On this single transaction the government lost fully $50,000.[1]

About the middle of October, another thousand purchased in Pennsylvania were ordered to be sent by railroad from Pittsburgh to Springfield, Illinois. Better and cheaper horses could have been obtained in the latter state, and the large transportation costs saved. Out of one lot of 252 of these inspected at Chicago, all but twenty-seven were found to be diseased, maimed or otherwise unfitted for use.[2] These are only examples of numerous frauds which occurred in Pennsylvania. Regiments of cavalry forwarded to Kentucky, a state famous for its horses, were equipped with Pennsylvania horses, poor in quality, and shipped at great expense to the government.[3]

In Indiana similar conditions prevailed. In one lot of sixty-seven horses bought at a price believed to be $120 each, not one was worth $25. A sub-contractor found that by "greasing the wheels" he was able to get an inspector to accept a horse that was "moon-eyed—blind as a bat." These animals died at the rate of eight a day.[4]

Contracts for horses were generally made without advertising for bids, large contracts being given at prices as high as $130 a head. Most of the deals were made with middlemen, who in turn bought from owners and breeders of horses. The former, it was estimated, made an average of at least $25 per horse, and as a class were utterly unreliable and shamefully dishonest.[5] Whatever other shortages there may

[1] *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 67, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 8, 25-27.

[2] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. lvi.

[3] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.*, p. 712.

[4] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. lvi-lvii.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. lvii, lx.

have been in the conduct of the war in 1861, a lack of horses was not one of them. Early in October there were over 8,000 horses in Washington, consuming forage and available for service when men could be found to mount them. They came in more rapidly than arms and men.[1]

The frauds connected with the chartering or purchasing of vessels were perhaps less numerous, but the sums lost in the transactions were usually much greater. A number of persons were in the beginning active in negotiating for vessels, but in a short while Cameron's appointee, John Tucker, and Tucker's sub-agents pretty nearly monopolized the field.[2] Before their coming, a man who was said to enjoy the "peculiar confidence of the government" chartered for not less than three months at a rate of $10,000 per month a ship which had been bought by the owners for $18,000 only a few days before. By the agreement the owners paid the running expenses and assumed risks covered by marine and fire insurance, and the government was given the privilege of buying the vessel for $50,000 at any time during the three months. If lost while under charter an equal sum was to be paid to the owners, and injuries in proportion. On investigation it was disclosed that the federal agent had been acting for, and in concert with, the parties who chartered the steamer to the government.[3]

Under Tucker sub-agents quickly appeared in coast ports, purchasing and chartering vessels, the government being charged by them from two and one-half to five per cent of the purchase money. An agent in Boston by this means netted $20,000 for one week's work. In another instance an agent acted in an advisory capacity for the government and as representative of shipping interests at the same time.[4]

[1] Meigs to Morgan, Oct. 3, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 559.

[2] *Vide*, pp. 128-130.

[3] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 3, 9, 17.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. iii-iv.

Tucker purchased two vessels for $100,000 each after engineers had pronounced them unsafe and the navy had refused to buy them. The construction price of the two had been $110,000. One of the vessels sank on her first voyage with a loss of all stores; the other on her first trip was so badly damaged she could hardly make port. Much of her freight was lost and an inspection board condemned her as useless for further service. Another ship bought by the War Department after being refused by the navy sank on her first trip with a loss of all on board except the crew, and they were taken prisoners.[1] A vessel chartered in November for General Butler's expedition at $2500 a day earned for her owners $135,000 before she weighed anchor. By March 5, 1862, she had earned $315,000, and when the Committee on Contracts wrote its report she was still under pay, her charter money having reached nearly $1,000,000.[2] A small vessel costing the owners $24,000 earned by charter $18,600 before any service was performed for the government; by the time one trip was completed the amount had risen to $29,000. The supplies shipped could have been moved for $825.[3] These instances were probably exceptional, and were doubtless used by the Committee to emphasize the rottenness of the system and the incompetence of the federal agents, but the investigations showed that the total losses amounted to millions of dollars.

While the Committee denounced profiteers, grafters and corrupt agents alike, it never forgot that Secretary Cameron was the party to be held responsible for the system and the losses. It was he who appointed such incompetent and inexperienced men as Alexander Cummings and John Tucker, and wittingly tolerated a suspension of contract safeguards

[1] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. iv-vi.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xi.

[3] *Ibid.*

when there was no good reason for it. Indeed, there was no one who more consistently disregarded them than the Secretary himself. Although the purchasing and contracting business was the work of the several bureau chiefs and their assistants, Cameron was actively engaged in it most of the time. When on January 15, 1862, Cameron sent a message to the Senate denying he had ever made "a single contract for any purpose whatever," representative Dawes produced documents showing that all but 64,000 of the 1,903,800 arms contracted for from August to January, 1862, were ordered under Cameron's direction.[1] Furthermore, on the very day that he denied participation, he ordered the extension for six months of a contract which was to expire in February. This favor was granted to a Pennsylvania firm which had been originally awarded a contract by the Ordnance Bureau for an unlimited number of swords and sabres. At the termination of the contract in October, 1861, Cameron had renewed it for four months in spite of the fact that General Ripley told him that it was neither necessary nor desirable.[2] The second renewal on January 15 was the more remarkable since Cameron was at that time merely acting as Secretary, Stanton's nomination to the post having been sent to the Senate on the 13th and confirmed on the 15th.

That the members of the Committee on Contracts were not the sole defamers of the Secretary and the condition of affairs had been demonstrated by the agitation for his removal in August, by Chase's statements of October and November, and those of many other public men. Senator Grimes of Iowa was one of the most persistent in his denunciations. In September he berated Cameron for keeping Pennsylvanians at home to fill army contracts, but sarcastically remarked that

[1] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 1840-1841; *New York Times*, Apr. 28, 1862.

[2] *Ibid.*; *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 67, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 215-216.

complaint should not be made since the Keystone State furnished a third of all the military officers and could not, therefore, be expected to furnish privates too.[1] A month later he said he had been growing gray "chafing like a confined bear at the imbecility of this administration and the corruption of its employees. . . . The government seems to be administered for the benefit of the Atlantic states and for the special advantage of the satellites of those members of the cabinet who were defeated by Mr. Lincoln at Chicago. . . ." [2] Again, in November he wrote: "The truth is, we are going to destruction as fast as imbecility, corruption and the wheels of time can carry us." [3] In the houses of Congress, the charges were sharp and frequent, and finally culminated in a vote of censure by the House after Cameron's exit from the War Office.[4] To Cameron's credit it must be acknowledged that he appears not to have been personally enriched by the maze of graft, fraud and corruption all about him, except through the increased revenues of the Northern Central Railroad.

In no section, bureau or military department was the law more flagrantly violated and the federal treasury more outrageously debauched than in the western department where General Frémont commanded. From the time of his arrival until the day of his leaving, fraud, corruption, extravagance and inefficiency were at the fore. On the whole, the evidence revealed nothing impeaching his personal integrity, but showed him to be surrounded by speculators, rogues and and unprofitable friends.[5] Frémont had taken up his duties

[1] Grimes to Fessenden, Sept. 19, 1861, Salter, William, *Life of James Grimes*, p. 153.

[2] Grimes to Trumbull, Oct. 24, 1861, Trumbull MSS.

[3] Grimes to Fessenden, Nov. 13, 1861, Salter, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[4] *Cong. Globe, loc. cit.*, p. 1888.

[5] Gustave Koerner in a letter to Lyman Trumbull, November 18, 1861, said: "There was a great amount of labor performed day and night,

at St. Louis in July amid a good deal of glamor; great things were expected of him and for their accomplishment he seems to have been endowed with almost unlimited power. Orders were given by General Ripley to the ordnance officer in New York to give every aid in his power toward the arming and equipping of the western army.[1] Montgomery Blair encouraged Frémont to take matters in his own hands and assume the responsibility for them.[2] So powerful was he in the West that "resistance to his mandates on the part of the citizen" was absolutely impossible. "He took what he chose, and disposed of private property on which he laid his hands as to him seemed good."[3] Laws, rules, regulations and systems went by the board, the general contending that the people of the United States were in the field, he was at their head and intended to act "without regard to the red tape of the Washington people."[4] Had he been a great leader and accomplished striking results, there would have been no objection to this, but it was soon plain that he was a third-rate commander, a poor business man, and was making no real progress at all.[5]

but there appeared to be no proper system or method. Some of his most intimate friends were undoubtedly cheating and circumventing him, I thought. He is no judge of men at all, it seems to me, and he can readily be imposed upon by plausible knavery. He seems to think that everybody is honest. I think he is honest and honorable himself, but too impulsive and too impressible." Trumbull MSS.; *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 55; Browning, Diary, Nov. 3 and 4, 1861, MS.

[1] Ripley to Hagner, July 16, 1861, *Ordnance Reports*, vol. iii, p. 7.

[2] M. Blair to Frémont, July 26, 1861, *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, p. 96.

[3] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 4.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

[5] When Frémont went to St. Louis he set himself up in sumptuous quarters in a private house at a rental of $6,000 a year. Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, p. 543.

The granting of practically *carte blanche* authority to him proved a great mistake. Liberty was mistaken for license; Frémont closeted himself with a crowd of conniving, dishonest men whose motives he did not suspect, distributed contracts to them for construction on a grand scale, allowed purchases to be made at prices far beyond the market rates, and when the funds necessary to cover this orgy of expenditure were not forthcoming from the well-nigh bankrupt treasury in Washington, private funds in St. Louis were either borrowed or seized upon and disbursed.[1] A more fool-hardy, ill-advised and profligate military administration could hardly have been devised.

Instead of having all the forts planned and constructed by army engineers as the law provided, a contract was given by Frémont to one of his western friends for the building of five forts. Eighty-five thousand dollars were advanced before the contract was signed, and in a period of six weeks, a total of $191,000 was paid, $111,000 of which was profit to the contractor.[2] A leading army engineer, General Cullom, estimated that if the work had been carried to completion under the original arrangements, the government would have been filched of about $240,000. He declared under oath that the forts were useless for defense and were constructed on no principle of military engineering with which he was familiar.[3]

Five other forts in the course of construction under the supervision of a military engineer were handed over to the same contractor for completion. So outrageous were the prices agreed upon for all the work that Frémont's chief quartermaster, an unprincipled rascal, was thoroughly

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, *loc. cit., passim; House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. lxi, lxiii-lxiv.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. xlii, 75-82; *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, *loc. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

shocked and promptly washed his hands of the whole affair.[1] When Cameron through the adjutant-general ordered a discontinuance of the work, Frémont contented himself with a protest and allowed the construction to proceed. He later justified this disobedience by saying: "I acted, I thought, in my right as commanding general of that department, carrying on military operations." [2]

In the acquisition of *matériel* for this department the excessive costs, frauds and inferior quality closely resembled those instances already mentioned in connection with the War Office. The thing which made the abuses here stand out so noticeably, however, was the fact that they were to be found in almost every phase of the work and were consummated openly and shamelessly. An army board which inspected a group of cavalry horses forwarded from St. Louis found that seventy-six were serviceable, 330 useless and five were dead. For these horses the price was $130 each, $11 higher than the highest price ordinarily paid for cavalry horses in St. Louis. The government's loss on the transaction was estimated at more than $40,000.[3] Under Major McKinstry, the department quartermaster, in only one instance was the rule of advertising followed in acquiring

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, *loc. cit.*, pp. 25-26. Quartermaster McKinstry had been assigned to the St. Louis headquarters by Floyd, but was removed by Holt. As soon as Cameron was appointed Secretary of War, a company of corrupt contractors in St. Louis exerted influence with Montgomery Blair and Cameron to have McKinstry reassigned. This was readily acceded to by the Secretary. Investigation later showed that the quartermaster was thoroughly ruthless and corrupt. He was tried by court martial for his transactions, found guilty on twenty-six counts and dismissed from the service. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 15-16, 20; *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 17; *House Report* No. 49, 37th Cong., 3rd Sess., *passim.*

[2] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, p. 53.

[3] *House Report* No. 2, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 98-99.

horses and in this one there was fraud before the deal was consummated. His friends did most of the purchasing at the $119 price fixed by him for cavalry horses. For artillery horses the excessive price of $150 was usually paid and for mules $119. Many horses bought for cavalry purposes were branded by the inspectors as artillery and the additional money charged by the middle-men supplying them.[1]

In August Frémont commissioned a resident of the national capital, experienced in horses but ignorant of the western market, to buy for him and inspect for the department, and this, in spite of the fact that a quartermaster officer at Cincinnati was already acting for the department. Competition was thus set up, yet the quartermaster obtained horses at an average cost of $101.26, while the agent paid from $125 to $130. The latter made purchases of horses and other property to the extent of $909,910 and claimed a commission of $22,000 for about three months work.[2]

Frémont's arms transactions began even before he had a military command. While in Europe during the spring he purchased without authority and shipped to the United States a quantity of foreign arms which were forwarded to the West when he took up command there.[3] Many of these proved defective and useless, a colonel of one regiment informing his superior that only twenty out of one hundred would discharge.[4] That there was a considerable shortage of arms in the western region when the general took over his department was undoubtedly true, and this seems to have convinced him that any and all available arms should be bought up at

[1] *House Exec. Doc.*, No. 94, loc. cit., pp. 8-9.

[2] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p xxxvi.

[3] *Vide*, p. 282.

[4] Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, p. 544. A man who was in Europe with Frémont claimed to have made $30,000 as "his share of the profits" in this purchase. *Ibid.*

once. Consequently an orgy of arms-buying quite regardless of price was begun, the Ordnance Bureau being ignored as though it never existed. Arms were usually obtained in the eastern cities by agents, or from speculators attracted to St. Louis as an El Dorado. The guns obtained, often through telegraphic dispatches, and without any certain knowledge of their character, do not seem to have been subjected to the tests prescribed by the regulations for determining their fitness for the service.[1]

Twenty-five thousand Austrian muskets were bought by an agent from a New York firm at a cost of $6.50 each, although they had already been rejected by an Ordnance Bureau officer at $5.50. The immediate necessity for arms could hardly have been considered an excuse for their purchase for they were practically useless until altered, a circumstance which made delay a necessity. At a time when whole regiments were almost destitute of arms on the eve of the battle of Belmont, these arms were left in the boxes in which they had been shipped from the arsenal at St. Louis.[2] Opinion differed as to their serviceability. Frémont testified that "they proved to be a good, substantial arm," many of the German troops under him preferring them. A regular army officer, however, contended they were not good weapons even when improved. He declared that their mechanism was poor, easily broken, and the guns would go off at half-cock.[3]

The most extraordinary of the arms acquisitions under Frémont concerned a quantity of Hall's carbines. In June, 1861, at the suggestion of the chief of ordnance and with Cameron's concurrence, these carbines, between five and six thousand in number were disposed of at $3.50 each to a

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, *loc. cit.*, p. 23.

[2] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. 37-38, 40.

[3] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, pp. 45-46, 251.

dealer, Arthur M. Eastman. Among these were 790 arms which Alexander Cummings had bought for the government in April at $15 each. After making slight and inexpensive alterations Eastman sold 5,000 of the lot to Simon Stevens for Frémont without any inquiry for $22 a piece. When an investigation was made later into the transaction, the Committee on Contracts expressed the belief that Stevens was actually serving on the general's staff at the time he closed the bargain. It declared that Frémont's order blindly accepting them was "a very natural order if Stevens was acting as his agent; rather remarkable if he was not." [1] Frémont stated later that Stevens was not on his staff at the time the deal was made, but subsequently became an aide-de-camp. As for the Hall's carbines, he declared that he had used such arms on one occasion on an overland journey, and that the ones purchased were good arms, firing on test with "reasonable accuracy." He "supposed" in buying them that "they were about what such arms usually are," but added, "I am not very familiar with them." [2] The Contracts Committee in considering the serviceability of the guns said that if they were valueless as Ripley and Cameron indicated, "the repurchase of the arm is without any possible excuse; if otherwise, the original sale of the arm is utterly indefensible." [3]

Prices paid for other kinds of weapons were also excessive. Enfield rifles for which the Ordnance Bureau paid $20 were bought by Frémont for $26.50; Colt's pistols were con-

[1] Eastman to Ripley, May 28, 1861, with Ripley's and Cameron's endorsements, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS.; Cameron to E. Lindner, June 8, 1861, Military Book No. 44, MSS.; *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, pp. 40-41, 51.

[2] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, loc. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

[3] *House Report* No. 2, *loc. cit.*, p. 41. The Committee declared that no considerations of public faith required or permitted the government to pay more than the amount paid to Eastman, that is, $12.50 each. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

tracted for at $35, whereas the price to the bureau was $25, and in 1862 the company offered to make them for $14.50. Colt's carbines and rifles were accepted at $60 and $65 respectively, which prices Ripley declared were far more than the arms were worth.[1] In its report on March 2, 1862, a Committee on War Claims at St. Louis set the amount of unpaid arms claims for the western department at $641,691. From this amount upon examination by the Committee, $40,474 were deducted on account of excessive prices.[2]

Blankets contracted for with one of Frémont's staff officers by direct order from the general were found upon examination to be made of cotton and were rotten and worthless. Notwithstanding this they were purchased and given to the sick and wounded in the hospitals.[3] Forage was bought in St. Louis at high rates and sent to army contingents at places where it was abundant and cheap.[4] Railroad rates fixed upon by Frémont's "superintendent of railroad transportation" were between forty and fifty per cent higher than they would have been had competition been allowed to take its course. Railroad officials themselves admitted that the rates provided were "materially higher" than their usual charges.[5] The receiver of one railroad deposed before an investigating commission that if the government would give his road the business that naturally and properly belonged to it, the company would carry troops at one cent per mile and could do so profitably. After the Frémont regime ended in the West, contracts were made readily with the roads east of the Mississippi for transport-

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 67, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 22-23.

[2] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 23.

[3] Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, pp. 542-543.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 542.

[5] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, *loc. cit.*, p. 11.

ing troops at the rate of one and a third cents each per mile.[1]

The wretched administration, laxity and frauds became strikingly evident before Frémont was in command many weeks. In spite of all the attention and assistance received from many quarters, the vast sums expended and the extraordinary measures taken by him, little was being accomplished; the suffering and shortages were considerable and the complaints were becoming increasingly frequent. In September Montgomery Blair and Meigs were sent to survey the situation and advise with Frémont.[2] Cameron and Adjutant-General Thomas followed in October and found conditions deplorable. Frémont's subordinate generals pronounced him a complete failure and urged his removal, Curtis stating that he "was no more bound by the law than by the winds."[3] A little later the Committee on Contracts, a Commission on War Claims[4] and the Committee on the Conduct of the War carried on investigations in the western department. Only in the latter committee were the general's actions accused, condoned or justified, and here Frémont's partisans held sway.[5] The others roundly denounced him, his actions and the crowd of speculators and dishonest men who preyed upon his department. Frémont himself admitted that toward the end of his period of command there was

[1] *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, *loc. cit.*, p. 12.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 413-415.

[3] Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 540-549.

[4] This Commission consisted of Joseph Holt, David Davis and Hugh Campbell. Its duty was to examine and settle the outstanding claims in Frémont's department originating prior to October 14, 1861. *House Exec. Doc.* No. 94, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess.

[5] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, loc. cit.*, pp. 3-6. Two members of the Committee declined to concur in the report on the ground that the testimony was too incomplete.

laxity. To the members of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, he said:

It may be as well for me to remark here in this connexion, also, that at that time I was in expectation of being removed from the department; and, as you may have noticed, things were done a little loosely; I mean, referring in all cases to myself, not done with all the strictness that generally pervades a department like that. [Again] . . . there was a great deal done in the western department which was not consistent with strict military propriety; a great deal.[1]

At the suggestion of Chase, and with the concurrence of Cameron on October 1, payments on all contracts connected with Frémont's department were suspended until investigations could be made as to their validity and fairness.[2] This, together with Frémont's removal in October,[3] helped to check the abuses in the military department of the West.

Toward the end of 1861 the War Department made some efforts to correct existing purchasing evils. As indicated, steps were taken in November to center arms contracting in the War Department. Also arrangements were made for the confiscation for government purposes of all arms imported from Europe.[4] But the government could expect no general

[1] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, loc. cit.*, pp. 59, 60.

[2] Cameron to Chase, Oct. 1, 1861, Military Book No. 46. The temporary cutting off of payments caused a good deal of unrest in the Department of the West, and made rather difficult the obtaining of additional supplies. In spite of the outrageous profligacy of Frémont's administration, troops were badly in need of a great many supplies. Trumbull to Lincoln, Oct. 1, 1861; L. B. Parsons to Trumbull, Nov. 15, 1861; S. Hoard to Trumbull, Dec. 4, 1861, Trumbull MSS.

[3] Orders were given on October 24 for Frémont's removal and on November 2, General David Hunter took over the command. *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, pp. 553, 559.

[4] Cameron's report, Dec. 1, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 703; *New York Tribune*, Dec. 4, 1861.

improvement until the many irregularities in acquiring *matériel* were brought to an end, and sound business methods were instituted in the War Department. These did not come until Edwin M. Stanton became Secretary of War in January, 1862. By that time the most pressing exigencies had been ameliorated, and the armies were sufficiently well equipped so that excuse no longer existed for resorting to a suspension of rules and extra-legal proceedings. Stanton proved an efficient, rigid and exacting administrator and seemed suspicious of all contractors until their integrity was established.[1] He was fortunate in enjoying the confidence and support of Congress and under him the bureaus were expanded to handle all war business in the proper way.

[1] Stanton's order, Jan. 29, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 869-870.

CHAPTER X

The European Front

The failure of the War Department to seek arms in Europe from the outset was a great mistake. In the first place it not only meant a shortage of arms for the augmented forces in the late summer and fall of 1861, but it left the southern agents unmolested except for competition with the state agents and speculators in the buying up of ready-made arms and in contracting for others for future delivery, a factor of no mean consequence in the prosecution of war. Had the government at the start gained control, or nearly so, of the European arms markets, the plight of the Confederacy would have been extremely serious. Having no facilities at home for the manufacture of ordnance, it staked much on the European supply.[1] Secondly, the entrance of a number of state agents into the foreign markets encouraged cut-throat competition among themselves, with the middle-men, and with the southern representatives; it resulted in rapid advances in prices, the acquisition of a wide variety of arms many of which were almost useless, and the tying-up with contracts of a large number of armories. Consequently when the federal government did turn its attention to this source, it had to contend with these enhanced prices, factories engaged in filling orders, and a market pretty well cleared of good arms for immediate delivery.

This negotiating for arms for the Union armies was carried on by a number of persons including specially designated

[1] Davis' Message to Confederate Congress, Feb. 25, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. iv, vol. i, p. 950.

agents, men to whom contracts had been given, consular officers and diplomatic representatives at foreign courts. The purchases of the consuls were small, their best work being done in assisting those higher in authority, or in scouting for suitable arms. Occasionally they were especially useful in tracking Confederate negotiations or purchases so that those entrusted with large credits might outbid the enemy agents, or in locating or watching Confederate stores ready for shipment to southern ports.[1] Of the diplomats Dayton in Paris, Adams in London and Sanford in Brussels may be mentioned in this connection. Dayton was ready to act when called upon; in several instances he was asked to perform services, and in a few others he took the initiative when opportunity afforded;[2] but in a short while Sanford almost completely preëmpted the field of diplomatic activity partly because of his zest and enthusiasm for the work and partly because more money was placed at his disposal. Charles Francis Adams engaged in the work to a limited extent but had no liking for it. He explained his attitude by saying: "My utter want of acquaintance with the quality and value of them [arms] would render me liable to every species of imposition if I were to undertake it." [3]

[1] G. W. Van Horne to Seward, Oct. 21, 1861, with enclosures, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.; H. J. Perry to Seward, undated, Ordnance Files, 1861. There are many letters in the letter books of Henry Sanford showing the activities of the consuls in assisting in this work. F. H. Morse was especially useful. Sanford Letter Press Books, MSS.

[2] Adams to Seward, June 7, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 293; Cameron's report, July 1, 1861, p. 308; Dayton to Seward, July 5, 1861, p. 338; Meigs to W. S. Pennington, Aug. 9, 1861, p. 393; Cameron to Seward, Aug. 14, 1861, p. 409; Schuyler to Cameron, Aug. 16, 1861, p. 419, and Sept. 5, 1861, pp. 484, 486; Cameron to Chase, Oct. 24, 1861, enclosure, p. 594; Meigs to Seward, Nov. 29, 1861, and enclosure to Dayton, Nov. 29, 1861, pp. 682-683; Baring Bros. to Cameron, Dec. 4, 1861, pp. 726-727; Schuyler to Cameron, Aug. 16, 1861; Dayton to Seward, Oct. 24, 1861, War Department Files, 1861.

[3] Adams to Seward, Aug. 6, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861.

At the same time he recognized it as his duty to place at the disposal of the goverment such information as came to him regarding means of procuring arms. Indeed, in June he strained his conservative New England conscience to the limit in assuming responsibility in conjunction with Dayton for drawing upon the government for $200,000 to pay for arms, cannon and shells contracted for by Frémont without authority in France and England.[1] He made it plain to Seward, however, that nothing but an understanding of the country's critical condition, and the joint opinion of all the diplomatic agents of the United States at the moment in Paris had induced him to overcome his scruples in doing this. Offers of service and of "all sorts of military implements" were constantly being received by him, but in every instance his reply had been that he had no authority to contract, and no desire to receive tenders of aid.[2] Preferring to confine its attention to diplomatic matters, the very proper London legation looked askance at the rather bold, meddlesome and aggressive performances of Minister Sanford in Belgium, France, England and elsewhere. Benjamin Moran, the conventional secretary, confided to his *Journal* on more than one occasion fulminations against him, setting him down as a "bouncing ill-mannered Yankee" and a "most impertinent fellow" who constantly interfered with other people's business.[3]

True though these charges may have been, Sanford deserves the credit for being one of the first to recognize the importance of the European arms markets. He manifested a thoroughly patriotic and earnest desire to render himself useful in the foreign field; had his early suggestions been acted upon promptly, an advantage which was seized upon by the

[1] *Vide*, p. 273.

[2] *Ibid.*; Adams to Seward, June 7, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, p. 293.

[3] Moran, Benjamin, Journal during the Mission of Charles Francis Adams, Aug. 9; Oct. 18 and 31, 1861, MS.

Confederacy might have been diverted to the interests of the North. On May 12 he wrote to Seward that he had vainly expected orders for the purchase of arms, and was tempted to order from Belgium all that could be had. He had already scouted the English and Belgian markets and hoped to get Adams to join him in an arms purchase. "It distresses me," he said, "to think while we are in want of them, Southern money is to take them away to be used against us." As a precaution against secession agents getting arms from the government arsenals at Toulon and exporting them to the South, he had interviewed M. Thouvenal of the French Government and sought his good offices in these matters. A little later, May 25, he again brought the arms question to Seward's attention, reviewed the situation in the European armories and markets and urged the advisibility of immediate action.[1]

Sanford's two messages were placed in Cameron's hands by Seward just at the time that the increase of ordnance and small arms was under consideration by Ripley, Cameron and General Scott, but none of them appreciated the importance of the European stocks either from the standpoint of arming the northern soldiers or their inestimable value to the South. What transpired clearly reveals this. June 3, the day before Seward referred the first Sanford message to the War Office, Ripley informed Cameron that in the absence of any official information as to the size of the entire military force contemplated, he had estimated for 250,000 men of all arms and was proceeding accordingly. He reminded the Secretary that he had suggested five weeks earlier the propriety of obtaining from abroad from 50,000 to 100,000 small arms and eight batteries of rifled cannon. Although a note of this had been made by Cameron he had not been advised by the Secretary of any action taken to carry out the proposal. Cameron

[1] Sanford to Seward, May 12 and 25, 1861, War Department Files, 1861.

replied approving of the chief's report, but stated that he had no recollection of the foreign ordnance matter. He now asked for a fuller report on the subject. Ripley complied on June 10, reviewing what had previously happened, but did not directly renew the suggestion of foreign contracts. In fact, the next day he recommended that no muskets of any kind be contracted for except those of the regular United States pattern, contending that all others were inferior and their introduction into the service caused confusion and retarded soldierly efficiency.

While these facts were doubtless true, it would seem that good weapons of other makes, such as Enfields or the improved continental arms, were far better than none at all, especially in view of the facts, as Ripley himself indicated, that more arms would be needed and domestic deliveries could not be made in less than six months, and in most cases in not less than a year. Colt, who had the most complete armory in the country, estimated it would take him six months to make the first delivery, and the Springfield armory at the time was capable of turning out very limited quantities. Nevertheless, Scott strongly commended Ripley's latest recommendations to the acceptance and "firm adherence" of the Secretary, and Cameron willingly approved.[1] They were right in line with his well-settled protectionist views, and afforded patronage opportunities that were not to be scoffed at—facts which cannot be overlooked in considering many of his performances.

June 19 Ripley wrote again, now suggesting that at least 100,000 arms of the latest pattern Springfield rifles be obtained with the least possible delay. "As regards the

[1] Seward to Cameron, June 4 and 19, 1861, with enclosures, War Department Files, 1861; Ripley to Cameron, June 3 and 10, 1861, *House Exec. Doc.* No. 67, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 29-30; Memo. by Ripley, June 11, with endorsements of Scott and Cameron, June 11 and 15, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861.

price," he said, "I consider the time of delivery of the arms as more important than their cost." [1] On the same day Sanford's second letter was referred to the War Office, but because of the joint approval in favor of Springfields only, it is probable that it received no more than a casual reading by the Secretary. Two days later Seward wrote Charles Francis Adams the comforting news that his conduct in aiding Frémont had been approved and stated that "The Government is not at present decided in authorizing more contracts for ordnance or arms." [2] Except for one lot of 10,000 arms which Sanford in July was commissioned to purchase, nothing further was done about the question of federal purchasing of arms in Europe until after Bull Run.[3]

It required the jolt of this telling defeat to bring the military powers to an appreciation of the foreign markets, but even then they did not seem to grasp the full significance of their military value, for little effort was made to check the importations to the Confederacy. They did, however, give up the idea of relying on Springfields alone. Guns which a few weeks earlier had been considered a detriment if placed in service were sought as indispensable to Union success. Bureaucratic machinery was speeded up to turn out the customary round of endorsements and instructions, so that Colonel George L. Schuyler might leave on July 31, ten days after Bull Run. On July 26 Seward called upon General Scott to obtain the necessary instructions. Scott promptly endorsed Seward's letter commending the mission to the Secretary of War and stating that General Ripley would give directions as to the quantity and description of arms needed. The chief clerk by Cameron's direction then made another endorsement and the letter went to the Ordnance Bureau.

[1] Ripley to Cameron, June 19, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 278-279.

[2] Seward to Adams, June 21, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861.

[3] Sanford to Seward, July 30, 1861, *ibid.*

On the 27th the ordnance chief drew up instructions for Schuyler and the Secretary wrote out the formal orders for him. Two days later more orders were written and the final touch came when the President approved these the same day, July 29.[1]

Two million dollars were to be placed to Schuyler's credit with Baring Brothers, London Bankers, for the purchase of 100,000 rifle muskets with bayonets, 20,000 sabres, 10,000 carbines and an equal number of revolvers. As many as possible of these weapons were to be bought ready-made; of the rest, contracts were to be made so that the arms could be delivered in New York in six months.[2] No instructions were given for the procurement of any except first-class guns.

Under the most favorable conditions such a commission was a substantial and exacting task, but the inadequacy of the hastily drawn instructions, due in part to the ignorance of the European market, the bungling delay in getting off Schuyler's letter of credit [3] and the peculiar conditions existing in the foreign fields at the time made it doubly difficult. And in addition, as already indicated, the states and the Confederacy had rushed agents over at an early date, bought up quantities of guns and by contracts had quite completely tied up the large and desirable arms establishments.[4] Guns were selling for twice the usual rates.[5] F. H. Morse, United States con-

[1] Seward to Scott, July 26, 1861, with endorsements of Scott and Lesley, Ordnance Files, 1861; Ripley to Schuyler, July 27, 1861, Ordnance Letter Press Book, vol. xvi, MSS.; Cameron's formal order, July 27, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 355; Cameron to Schuyler, July 29, 1861, with Lincoln's endorsement, War Department Files, 1861.

[2] Ripley to Schuyler, July 27, 1861, Ordnance Letter Press Book, vol. xvi; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, Ordnance Files, 1862.

[3] *Vide*, pp. 288-289.

[4] *Vide*, p. 280.

[5] Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*; Adams, Charles Francis, *Studies Military and Diplomatic*, p. 361, quoting from the diary of his father.

sul in London, who had investigated and was familiar with English conditions, wrote to Minister Sanford on August 2 that he was confident few Enfields were to be had for immediate delivery. A brief survey led Schuyler to the same conclusion. Four days after his arrival in London, August 16, he wrote home that he had already ascertained that no Enfields, carbines or revolvers could be obtained in the country. Most of the private armories in Birmingham and London were busily engaged in filling orders for Ohio, Connecticut and Massachusetts, except the London Armory whose output was said to be destined for the Confederacy. Old arms of every description, however, were said to be had in abundance and at low prices, for the European governments, ever mindful of belligerent neighbors, were discarding their obsolete stocks in favor of new models.[1] But second-class arms did not come within the scope of his instructions. The best he could do was to inform the War Department of their existence and then await the disposition of the Secretary and chief of ordnance.

Reports reaching Schuyler from Sanford and Dayton as to the availability of good arms on the continent were equally discouraging.[2] Both had voluntarily been in treaty for certain lots, but had encountered obstacles. It frequently happened that enterprising speculators offered arms, hoping after an agreement was reached to be able to scrape up enough to fill the order. Guns represented as first-class often turned out to be old arms remodeled and polished up.[3] Dayton on August 15 wrote to Seward that it required great circumspection and care to prevent imposition by unscrupulous contractors.[4]

[1] F. H. Morse to Sanford, Aug. 2, 1861, Sanford Letter Book, MSS.; Schuyler to Cameron, Aug. 16, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.

[2] Sanford wrote home saying that the English government had almost monopolized the manufacture of Enfields at Liège. Sanford to Seward, Sept. 19, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS.

[3] Schuyler to Cameron, Oct. 31, 1861, *ibid.*

Confronted with this situation, Schuyler thought it best to give most of his attention to procuring the necessary arms from the government arsenals. These places seemed the only source of immediate supply. At the English arsenals he failed completely, but he seemed in a fair way to succeed in obtaining from the French arsenals 48,000 *chasseurs de Vincennes* rifles of the latest pattern for about $17 each. The negotiations were carried on in London with a French firm; half of the lot were to be delivered in thirty days, the remainder in sixty days from the signing of the contract.[1] About the same time he succeeded in forcing a wedge into the apparently impenetrable Birmingham market. On August 20 he brought negotiations almost to the point of closing a contract with the manufacturers of that city for about 35,000 Enfields at sixty-five shillings each, all for delivery in New York within six months.[2]

Then occurred a serious misfortune. The government at home blundered. Schuyler's letter of credit, which could not be arranged for before his quick departure on July 31, and which was to have been sent by the steamer of August 7, failed to arrive. As a consequence all that he had done since his landing fell through. The bankers while satisfied that the delay was accidental, had received no intimation of the government's intentions, and considered the obligations

[1] An offer of 20,000 of these had been made previous to Schuyler's arrival to Ministers Dayton and Sanford who had accepted the terms, but had been unable to take them for want of funds. When Schuyler landed he took over their agreement and bargained for 28,000 more. Schuyler to Cameron, Aug. 20 and Sept. 27, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*

[2] Schuyler to Cameron, Aug. 20, 1861, *loc. cit.* There was at Birmingham an association of manufacturers which practically controlled the output of good arms of that city. Independent producers and agencies were not to be relied upon for first-class arms. Similar associations and conditions prevailed elsewhere in England and on the continent. Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 5, 1861, McClellan MSS.

Schuyler desired to incur too large to be undertaken. And the cautious dealers declared they would close contracts with no one who could not refer them to credits on hand in the country. Confederate agents stood ready to take up the English contract and did close a deal at sixty-six shillings per gun, so this lot was lost immediately.[1]

For the French guns there was still a chance. Schuyler went to Paris and renewed negotiations, but when his credits came by the steamer of August 14, it was found that they were invalid due to the omission of Cameron's signature, and so had to be returned to Washington for confirmation. After some delay, however, the Barings finally agreed to, and did, advance the money for the French rifles. Alas, it was then too late. The transaction, which from the beginning had been of a rather mysterious nature,[2] became known and the Confederate agents through a French general of division boldly applied to the emperor for a similar concession for their government. This upset the whole deal. Napoleon III did not want to be troubled with the affairs of the "South Americans" and settled the problem by allowing neither party to have any arms from the French arsenals. This decision was not reached until the middle of October.[3]

Unfortunately Schuyler had in a letter of September 5 informed the War Department that a contract for these

[1] Schuyler to Sanford, Aug. 13, 1861, Sanford Letter Book, MSS.; Schuyler to Cameron, Aug. 20, 1861, *loc. cit.*; Morse to Seward, Oct. 26, 1861, War Department Files, 1861; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*

[2] There appears to have been some understanding between the firm which offered Schuyler the arms and the French officials. Schuyler said he supposed that the government connived at the arrangements. Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 5, 1861, McClellan MSS.; *ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861.

[3] Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 5, 1861, *loc. cit.*; *ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1861, *loc. cit.*; Schuyler to Sanford, Sept. 20 and Oct. 18, 1861, Sanford Letter Book; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*

French arms had actually been closed, and arrangements had been made by it for their distribution among the states. When week after week passed and they failed to arrive, there was considerable impatience and some dissatisfaction with Schuyler's services in the matter.[1] Nor had he been very successful in obtaining large stores of arms from other sources in France or in Belgium. As in England, the armories in both countries would contract for future delivery only, and then only for small quantities per month unless the contract was very large. Prices were high in all these countries, but Schuyler predicted they would fall a few months hence if the Confederate agents did not have the funds they claimed to possess. Of second-class arms there continued to be all kinds in large and small lots and at varying prices, but Schuyler had been told by Cameron in a letter of September 16 to abide by General Ripley's instructions to purchase first-class arms only.[2]

Convinced that England, France and Belgium were not fruitful of opportunities for immediate results, and constantly prodded on for arms by Cameron and Assistant Secretary Scott, Schuyler turned his attention to Central Europe, again seeking guns in government arsenals. In this new field he was more fortunate. He effected quite readily a purchase of 10,000 cavalry carbines at $6 each in Bohemia, and on October 1, succeeded in obtaining from the Dresden arsenal of the Saxon government 27,055 rifles which had been made at Liège. In pattern they were almost identical to the Enfields except for 1,000 which were of Aust-

[1] T. A. Scott to Schuyler, Oct. 8 and 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 567, 581.

[2] Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 5, 1861, *loc. cit.*; Schuyler to Sanford, Sept. 17 and 20, 1861, Sanford Letter Book; Cameron to Schuyler, Sept. 16, 1861, Military Book No. 46; Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 27, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861.

rian style. The price was $14 on board steamer, one dollar more than they would have been had not foreign bankers holding contracts given by our government to individuals sought to intervene. They offered a much higher price after it was known that the Saxon government would part with the arms, and it was only with difficulty that Schuyler obtained possession of them at all.[1]

Schuyler's greatest success, however, was in Austria where the sympathy of the government and the people was wholeheartedly with the North. So firmly were they opposed to the Confederacy that notice was given that no letters addressed to the seceded states would be carried by the Austrian mail service.[2] The armories of Vienna, the largest manufactory in Europe, were tied up with work for the next three months, but so ready and generous was the spirit of the government that it was not necessary to wait. October 24 Schuyler obtained from the Austrian arsenals a concession for 60,000 rifles of superior quality, and subsequently an additional lot bringing the total to 70,048. The price per gun including packing, express, freight and delivery on board ship at Havre and Hamburg was $15. Rhulman, the armorer accompanying Schuyler, declared the arms could be rifled from the present calibre of .54 to .58 without injury, and pronounced them equal to the United States rifles. Every facility was afforded by the Austrian War Department and in eight days 50,000 guns were packed and delivered to the railroad. Forty thousand were on the way to the United States by the middle of November and the remainder followed at short intervals. All the arms obtained

[1] Cameron to Schuyler, Sept. 2, 1861, Military Book No. 46; Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 27, 1861, *loc. cit.*; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, Ordnance Files, 1862; Cameron to Chase, Oct. 24, 1861, enclosure, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 593-595.

[2] T. Canisius to Seward, Nov. 30, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861.

were new and were the only first-class ones released by the government at that time. Others obtained by agents and individuals and disposed of to the United States were old and defective arms, readily obtainable in Vienna and elsewhere at very low prices.[1]

In addition to these several government concessions, Schuyler obtained from time to time a sufficient number of rifles, revolvers, carbines, sabres and ammunition from private sources to exhaust the original credit placed at his disposal and more besides. From manufacturers at Liège 4,000 rifles of the *chasseurs de Vincennes* pattern were contracted for, costing $17.60 each, to be delivered by January 1, 1862. Fifteen thousand Enfields were arranged for with the Small Arms Association of Birmingham at the average cost of $18.45. Ten thousand revolvers at $12.50, first quality, and 10,000 cavalry carbines at $6 were obtained from the armories in France and Belgium and a total of 21,000 cavalry sabres of French pattern, some ready-made, others to order, were purchased in Germany at an averaged cost of $3.96. In all cases the prices named included all expenses of packing and transportation preliminary to placing on the steamers.[2]

Throughout his transaction Schuyler's business methods seem to have been cautious and well managed. All operations on the continent were conducted through the house of Ed Lade & Company of Paris, with whom he arranged in advance the exact sum they were to receive for carrying out the details of contracts and purchases such as covering and railway charges, incidental expenses and their own commission. In England a similar arrangement was made with the

[1] Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*; Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 27, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861; Schuyler to Sanford, Oct. 31, 1861, Sanford Letter Book.

[2] Schuyler to Sanford, Nov. 23, 1861, Sanford Letter Book; Schuyler to Cameron, Nov. 14, 1861, War Department Files, 1861; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*

American house of Van Wort, Son & Company of Birmingham when a deal was closed for 15,000 Enfields. Rhulman inspected the arms wherever purchases were made and reported upon them with an impartiality which, Schuyler declared, was proof against the enormous inducements to the contrary proffered on all sides. Bribes offered to both agent and armorer proved among the most unpleasant features of their mission. Before Schuyler wrote his report in the spring of 1862, all of the arms arranged for had arrived safely in the United States.[1]

At no stage of his work did the War Department seem to understand the true situation in the European market, in spite of the fact that Schuyler wrote frequently. It seemed difficult to convince the officials that quantities of first-class arms were not readily available in the open market. Finally on October 31, to impress the authorities Schuyler stated that this class of arms could not be obtained on short notice at any price, not even at $100 apiece, unless obtained from government arsenals or by buying up contracts of private parties who were themselves active in filling orders for the War Department.[2] Nor did the department seem to comprehend that it was only complicating for itself the acquisition of arms when it gave contracts to private companies to be filled in Europe, or when it continued to tolerate the sending abroad of state agents with instructions to buy guns "at any price."[3] In his letter of October 31,

[1] Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, *loc. cit.*

[2] Schuyler to Cameron, Sept. 5, 1861, McClellan MSS.; Cameron to Schuyler, Sept. 16, 1861; Scott to Schuyler, Oct. 21, 1861, Military Book No. 46; Schuyler to Cameron, Oct. 31, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS.

[3] Morse to Seward, Oct. 26, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.; Welles to Cameron, Nov. 20, 1861, enclosure, Ordnance Files, 1861. Welles wrote Cameron that he had received a letter from a "responsible source" in Paris who stated: "The fault is one of method—the Department instead of adopting a method of business adopts a double method —it sends a special agent to buy arms and it issues contracts—the agent

Schuyler renewed his suggestion that such agents be kept at home.[1] Two weeks later he wrote privately to Assistant Secretary Scott that no reliance should be placed upon receiving 120,000 new rifles which two American contractors had agreed to obtain from Europe, for such guns were unobtainable. He predicted that it would be found that these "new" guns would prove either a myth or old, remodeled ones. Schuyler himself had been in treaty with the parties offering to one of these Americans and knew they did not have what they represented to have. It was only after failing to contract with him that they had transferred their operations to

and the contractors come into the market, and of necessity bid against each other; the consequence is that muskets worth fifty-five (55) francs are run up to 70, 80, 90 francs, and sabres worth 15 and 20 francs, go up to 40 and 50 francs. Had the business been left wholly to the Government agent, the Government would have got just as many arms at the lower prices." An instance was cited in which a lot of sabres were contracted for by a government agent, deliverable on a certain day or a forfeit of sixty cents each was to be paid. The contractor failed to deliver and paid the forfeit, his reason being that another party offered a higher price and took them. The second party had a contract from the War Department with a time limit fixed as to delivery. The result of the deal was that the government paid about $20,000 above the cost of the first contract. Similar instances were said to have taken place with regard to muskets.

By far the largest part of the arms gotten in Europe appear to have been obtained through contracts made in Washington. Schuyler bought 116,103 rifles, but the report of the chief of ordnance shows that between April, 1861 and June 30, 1862, a total of 726,705 rifles and muskets of European makes were purchased by the government. Report of chief of ordnance, Nov. 21, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. ii, p. 885; Schuyler's report, Apr. 8, 1862, Ordnance Files, 1862.

In the case of many of these arms the inspection took place in Europe and was utterly inadequate. The result was that a large number of the troops were armed with guns of inferior quality. Many of these arms were contracted for at high rates. *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 72, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 14-15; P. H. Watson to J. F. Wilson, Feb. 20, 1862, Military Book No. 47.

[1] Schuyler to Cameron, Oct. 3, 1861, *loc. cit.*

the United States.[1] And if second-hand arms were acceptable, there was no need for acting through commission merchants, for Schuyler had time and again reported that he could procure any quantity at very low prices. But orders to do so never came.

While Schuyler was hastening from place to place searching for arms, Minister Sanford was playing the man of all work. By far the busiest American representative in Europe, he seemed to delight in having a half dozen irons in the fire at the same time. Belgium was too confining for his ambition and zeal; his activities though centered in Brussels spread out into France, England, Germany and elsewhere. Diplomatic functions were practically a side issue with him; war work was at the fore and he pursued it with a will.

Much of what Sanford did was on his own initiative; at no time did he receive the liberal cooperation and support from the government that he so anxiously looked for. Seward more than any other official recognized his usefulness, encouraged him and sought to afford him some means to carry on his work, but it was far too little.[2] It is true that on August 28, Cameron directed the Secretary of State to authorize Baring Brothers to accept drafts not exceeding in all $1,000,000 for purchases to be made by Dayton, Sanford or Schuyler, but although Seward immediately complied, neither the War or Treasury Departments notified any of the men of the fund placed at their disposal. Their first intimation of it came from Baring Brothers, Schuyler receiving word October 15 and Dayton and Sanford on October 22.[3] In the meantime

[1] Schuyler to Scott, Nov. 14, 1861, War Department Files, 1861.

[2] Schuyler to Sanford, Aug. 13, 1861, Sanford Letter Book.

[3] F. W. Seward to Baring Brothers, Aug. 28, 1861, with enclosure of Cameron to Seward, Aug. 28, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 461-462; Dayton to Seward, Oct. 24; Sanford to Seward, Oct. 25; Schuyler to Cameron, Nov. 14, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.; Cameron to Chase, Oct. 3, 1861, Military Book No. 46.

the War Office decided to place the entire amount at the disposition of Sanford, but a large part of it was to be used to pay installments on contracts made by Cameron with agents of Boker & Company, a European munitions concern.[1]

For weeks Sanford had been running down Confederate contracts and had by his diligence located many of them. Had he been given wide powers for action and equipped with large credits, it is reasonable to presume that he could have acquired many of them, thereby materially helping the northern armies and inflicting serious injury upon the South. Without such credits much of his effort proved futile. He had positive knowledge of contracts in Belgium for 60,000 stand of arms, 300,000 yards of army cloth, 100,000 blankets, 300,000 pairs of shoes and other supplies.[2] One Belgian city, he reported, had been at work night and day on a Confederate contract for 200,000 yards of cloth which were about ready for shipment, and part of which were being transported to Havre where three vessels awaited to run the blockade.[3] November 12 he informed Seward that he had an option of complete control of this material, and for 100,000 yards deliverable from December 15 to January 26, and for 100,000 blankets. Sanford sought to have the quartermaster agent, George P. Smith, then in Europe to buy cloth, take over these contracts, but Smith declined contending he had no authority to do so since his instructions required the purchasing of cloth of a particular quality and texture and at the low-

[1] Seward to Sanford, Oct. 14, 1861, with Scott's endorsement; Scott to Sanford, Oct. 14, 1861, Military Book No. 46; Schuyler to Cameron, Nov. 14, 1861; Sanford to Cameron, Nov. 14, 1861, War Department Files, 1861. This $1,000,000 was exclusive of the earlier sum placed at Schuyler's disposal.

[2] Sanford to Cameron, Nov. 12, 1861, *ibid.*; Sanford to Seward, Nov. 14, 1861, Sanford Letter Press Book, MSS.

[3] *Ibid.*

est prices.[1] As a consequence, the Southerners retained control.

But Sanford did not despair of losing so fine a prize. On November 28 he wrote to Seward saying he was watching the vessels destined to take the cloth to the South and hoped to be able to inform the government as to their sailing date so that the naval vessels might have a chance to capture both ships and cargoes.[2]

Although he failed to obtain the cloth before its shipment, he did succeed in obtaining 40,000 stand of arms which were destined for the same Confederate cargo, and at another time during the same month reported that he had acquired an enemy contract for 72,000 arms at prices ranging from $4.40 to $7. Sanford claimed that the quality and calibre fitted in with the Ordnance Bureau regulations,[3] but this seems unlikely. Also he obtained a lot of 2,280 muskets at $9 apiece.[4] A month later he concluded negotiations with a company for 500 *chasseurs* and all the Vincennes carbines that could be delivered up to December 25, with the right to extend the time limit if he so desired.[5]

About this same time, December 13, Assistant Secretary Scott notified Sanford that an additional million dollars was being placed to his credit which was to be used to pay for 60,000 foreign arms contracted for at $7.65 each with American middle-men and the remainder was to be applied in payment for guns being furnished under the Boker & Company contract. Upon the completion of these contracts no

[1] Sanford to Seward, Nov. 12, 1861, *ibid.*; Sanford to Seward, Nov. 14, 1861, *ibid.* Sanford admitted the cloth in question to be inferior in quality.

[2] Sanford to Seward, Nov. 28, 1861, *ibid.*

[3] Sanford to Seward, Nov. 14, 1861, *loc. cit.*; Sanford to Cameron, Nov. —, 1861, *ibid.*

[4] Sanford to Cameron, Dec. 7, 1861, *ibid.*

[5] Sanford to J. Henderson, Dec. 11, 1861, Sanford Letter Press Book.

more European arms were to be taken, the department believing that domestic manufacturies would be able to furnish an ample supply.[1]

Once having obtained arms on his own initiative or by payment on contracts made by the War Office for foreign guns, the energetic Sanford applied himself to forwarding them as rapidly as possible. December 9 he reported that he was straining every nerve to dispatch 100,000 of them in the next three weeks.[2] To do this he used the regular boat service, and in addition resorted to the unusual practice of chartering vessels, in one instance paying $40,000 cash to a company in Hamburg for a vessel to make the outbound voyage.[3] In January he closed another charter, this time for an English vessel. The latter carried a cargo consisting of one lot of 25,000 guns, 140 tons of saltpetre and all the arms Boker & Company had ready. Also he informed Cameron that he was making arrangements to hasten forward 505 cases of arms which had been held up in England by a royal proclamation forbidding exportation of such stores.[4]

[1] Sanford to Seward, Nov. 12, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*, pp. 631-632; Scott to Sanford, Dec. 13 and 23, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 742, 756; Cameron to Sanford, Dec. 12, 1861, Military Book No. 47.

[2] Sanford to Seward, Dec. 9, 1861, Sanford Letter Press Book.

[3] Smith to McDonald & Co., Dec. 11, 1861, *ibid.*

[4] Sanford to Seward, Jan. 21, 1862; Sanford to Cameron, Jan. 23, 1862, Sanford Letter Book, MSS. When war between England and the United States seemed possible as a result of the seizure of Mason and Slidell, two proclamations were issued by the British government for the purpose of stopping the forwarding of arms and supplies to the North. The first, issued November 30, 1861, prohibited the exportation of gun powder, saltpetre, nitrate of soda and brimstone. The second, issued on December 4, extended the embargo to arms, ammunition, military stores and lead. While they lasted the prohibitions were very injurious to the Union cause. In one instance 3,000 tons of saltpetre which Du Pont & Company were on the point of exporting were held up. *New York Herald*, Dec. 16, 1861; *New York Tribune*, Dec. 19, 1861, quoting from the *London Gazette Extraordinary* of Dec. 4; *New York Evening Express*, Dec. 24, 1861, quoting from the *London Morning Post* of Dec. 6; Hughes, *Life of John M. Forbes*, vol. i, p. 260.

When not in actual pursuit of arms contracts or busying himself in preparing for the shipment of *matériel,* Sanford was often occupied with a sort of secret service system which he was managing, and in attempting to win public opinion to the northern side. But neither of these efforts assumed anywhere near the scope that their importance warranted, for here again the government at home utterly failed to appreciate their significance. Instead of attempting to stop the guns and stores, the *sine qua non* of the southern cause in this early period at the very source, the administration seemed to prefer to take its chances on seizing the vessels as they attempted to run the blockade, a feat which was performed with astonishing regularity in the fall, winter and spring of 1861-1862.

Having a comparatively small stock of arms at the opening of the struggle and very meagre manufacturing facilities, the Confederate authorities had almost immediately turned to Europe. April 15 Captain Huse was sent over by the War Department to purchase ordnance, arms, equipment and military stores; in May Major Edward Anderson was directed to proceed thither to cooperate with him; in July Charles Green was dispatched, and on August 31, Henry Hotze received orders of a similar nature. Also Captain James H. North of the Confederate Navy was sent abroad at an early date to purchase vessels for the new government.[1]

Arms were in especial demand and orders were given for the purchase and immediate shipment of 100,000.[2] Funds commensurate with the size of the order were not provided at first, however, and considerable difficulty resulted for a time. Huse had received only £30,000 prior to Anderson's arrival,

[1] Cooper to Huse, Apr. 15, 1861, *Letters and Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General's Offices,* p. 52; Walker to Anderson, May 18, 1861; Walker to Green, July 1, 1861, *Letters Sent by the Confederate States War Department,* pp. 124, 142; Walker to Hotze, Aug. 31, 1861, *O. R.,* ser. iv, vol. i, p. 596.

[2] Walker to Green, July 1, 1861, *loc. cit.*

and the latter appears not to have had a sufficiently large sum at his command, for he had been in England only a short time when he wrote urging the necessity of additional remittances to meet the arrangements already entered into.[1] The agents found friends aplenty in Liverpool and elsewhere but it was money which brought results. "Money," said Anderson, "will accomplish anything in England,"—and he meant it in a broad sense.[2] Up to July 1 the two men engaged merchandise to the amount of £56,863.[3] Thereafter the obligations for arms and stores rose rapidly, more rapidly at times, it appears, than they could be discharged. By the middle of October they had received only £155,000 in all, although to carry out their instructions and meet outstanding contracts a total of £450,000 was required.[4] Assurances were given that funds would be forthcoming, and that they did arrive may be easily surmised from the frequency of the shipments to the South. Indeed by March 7 credits had been made to the amount of at least £535,000.[5]

The fact that the Confederate agents were purchasing arms and stores and forwarding cargoes to the South was well known from the start by the American legations in Europe and by the Washington government.[6] To check up on them

[1] Anderson to Walker, July 6, 1861, Confederate Archives, War Department, MSS.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Anderson to Huse, Oct. 14, 1861, *ibid.*

[5] In the letter of instructions to Henry Hotze, August 31, 1861, the Confederate Secretary of War, Walker, stated that five remittances totalling $907,055 had been made, and other correspondence shows that Walker's successor, Benjamin, issued requisitions for $1,761,600 more in September, 1861, and January, February and March, 1862. Walker to Hotze, Aug. 31, 1861, *O. R., loc. cit.*; Jno. Fraser & Co., to Benjamin, Sept. 30, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 633; Benjamin to Huse, Mar. 10, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 985.

[6] Morse to Seward, July 19, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 445-446.

Sanford had begun his secret service in a feeble way in July, but during that month and the two succeeding ones the expenditures for it were negligible. Consul Freeman H. Morse in London reported to him on September 30 that he had disbursed £345 in the work in England, and this amount had exceeded the funds provided by about £20.[1] The meagreness of the sum available becomes nothing short of ridiculous when it is recalled that England was the center of secessionist activity at that time. But in spite of this shortcoming and the deceptive tactics used to conceal embarkation and shipment, considerable information was gained as to Confederate efforts. Morse and Sanford were in frequent correspondence on the espionage work; Sanford had a detective in England running down clues to Confederate purchases and shipments and reporting to him daily so that he might post the home government on secessionist activities and sailings.[2] Even the very proper London legation lent a hand at times. When it was learned that the *Bermuda* laden with *matériel* was going to leave England and attempt to run the blockade, Adams protested to Her Majesty's government, although without success.[3]

The *Bermuda* appears to have been the first of a number of chartered vessels to leave for the South. Although the United States government had been notified in time to block her entry, she landed her stores successfully in a southern port.[4] Similarly the *Sumter,* a privateer, traversed the seas

[1] Memo. from Morse to Sanford, Sept. 30, 1861, Sanford Letter Book.

[2] Morse-Sanford correspondence, 1861, *ibid., passim.*

[3] Benjamin Moran's Journal, Aug. 23, 1861, MS. Lord John Russell declared that under the English law she could not be detained, but since her cargo was contraband she might be seized at sea.

[4] *Ibid.,* Oct. 17, 1861. In commenting on the success of the *Bermuda,* Moran said: "Had the officers of our Squadron been half as vigilant as this Legation has been neither the Bermuda nor any other vessel would have escaped. I wrote home she would go to a Southern port, but it seems to have been disregarded."

for months without being overtaken.[1] The *Fingal* sailed from Greenock in October with about 400 tons of arms and ammunition. Her cargo, gathered from all parts of the kingdom, had been moved from place to place in small vessels to avoid being traced. In due time she put in at Savannah.[2] All of these movements and sailings and others later on were known by American officials in Europe and steps were taken to post the administration in Washington, but there appears to have been a general indifference and a lack of coordination between the War and Navy Departments. The blockade was hopelessly deficient and ineffective.[3] Sanford reported that the success of the vessels in landing their stores had greatly emboldened the southern agents in their operations,

[1] Benjamin Moran's Journal, Sept. 30, 1861.

[2] *Ibid.*, Oct. 5, 7, 9, 1861; Dec. 2, 1861; Welles to Cameron, Nov. 20, 1861, with enclosure, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS.

[3] The ineffectiveness of the blockade, it must be admitted, was by no means the fault of the Navy Department alone. The navy, like the army, had suffered much before the war because of the indifference of Congress to the whole question of defense. Welles said that the navy at the outset was utterly inadequate for the blockading task. In his annual report of 1861, he stated that the navy then had in service or nearly ready for service 264 vessels. Many of these had been acquired during the year. Welles' report, Dec. 2, 1861, *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 1, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 9, 13; Report of Dec. 1, 1862, *House Exec. Doc.* No. 1, 37th Cong., 3rd Sess., p. 25.

The Confederate Secretary of War, Benjamin, gives some idea of the ineffectiveness of the blockade in a letter of January 5, 1862: "At Brunswick, in Georgia, there has been no enemy's vessels in two months past.... At Wilmington there is hardly a show of a blockade. At Georgetown, S. C., hardly any risk. If a vessel could manage to approach any one of these ports so as to make the last sixty or seventy miles of her run during the night, there is scarcely a chance of her capture." Benjamin to L. Heyliger, Jan. 5, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. iv, vol. i, p. 832; also Anderson to Benjamin, Dec. 15, 1861, Confederate Archives, MSS. A favorite way of getting stores from Europe into the Confederacy was to land them in the West Indies, and then trans-ship them by small vessels to coast ports. Many dispatches to and from Benjamin revealing the extent of this blockade-running are to be found in *O. R., loc. cit., passim.*

had excited speculators all over Europe to increased activity and had strengthened the Confederate credit in the purchase of necessary supplies, some of which they were now able to treat for in terms of delivery in southern ports.[1]

Sanford's operations in England, as has been mentioned,[2] caused considerable irritation to the London legation. Aside from the resentment of his entering into what Adams considered his own sphere of action, it was believed that Sanford's espionage system was useless and injurious. It was said to be so clumsy as to lead to its own detection. The English papers printed stories of the secret service and scolded the London legation for it, while Sanford escaped unscathed.[3] Adams appears to have protested against it for in November assurances were given him that he would be relieved of further embarrassment in regard to it; and Sanford was instructed to discontinue the work in England.[4] Thereafter he confined most of his efforts to following up Confederate activities on the continent.

In December Sanford was on the trail of a large consignment of cloth in France, enough to clothe 100,000 troops. It went first to Havre and from there was moved to Marseilles as the port of clearance. As soon as the movements were known he informed the consuls in these cities and requested them to watch the goods closely. In his letter of January 2, reporting on this activity, he said that 500 bales of the cloth were due to leave that day on a French steamer for Havana, from whence an attempt would be made to sift them through into southern ports.[5] Other shipments followed from time to time. Sanford believed that none escaped his notice and

[1] Sanford to Seward, Nov. 14, 1861, Sanford Letter Press Book, MSS.

[2] *Vide*, p. 282.

[3] Moran's Journal, Oct. 18 and 31, 1861, MS.

[4] *Ibid.*, Nov. 19, 1861.

[5] Sanford to Seward, Jan. 2, 1862, Sanford Letter Press Book.

in each case the authorities in Washington were notified, yet up to the middle of February, so far as he knew, not a single Confederate cargo ship had been lost or captured.[1] One company on the continent found the business of blockade-running so profitable that it engaged regularly in it. It made up "assorted cargoes," gave shares to the captain and crew and sold others.[2]

Because of the lack of success in stopping the contraband shipments, in March, 1862, Sanford suggested that the government enter into treaty with those who sold and shipped to the Confederacy for the betraying of vessels and cargoes into the hands of the federal naval vessels. In a letter to Seward he said that a proposition of this sort had been made to him recently by one of the parties engaged in business with the Southerners. For a definite sum of money a steamer about to leave for the South with supplies valued at £120,000 would be run into the blockading squadron or ashore where she could be captured. Sanford thought £40,000 or £50,000 would cover the cost of the undertaking and believed that it would be a good operation financially. He intimated this scheme might also be applied to advantage in the case of three other steamers soon to leave with arms, ammunition and supplies.[3] April, 1, 1862, he reported that the owners of the *Memphis,* which was to leave England with 1,100 tons cargo of blankets, shoes, cloth, powder and other stores, costing £65,000, would for the sum of £53,000 deliver up or ground

[1] Sanford to Seward(?), Feb. 19, 1862, *ibid.* Welles in his report of December 2, 1861, stated that since the institution of the blockade 153 vessels had been taken, most of which were attempting to run the blockade. Undoubtedly nearly all of these were small boats operating out of the West Indies. Secretary Benjamin wrote much about blockade-running in the fall and winter of 1861-1862, but his letters do not show that the federal navy was enjoying any real success in overhauling vessels from Europe. *O. R.*, ser. iv, vol. i, *passim.*

[2] Sanford to Seward, Jan. 23, 1862, Sanford Letter Press Book.

[3] Sanford to Seward, Mar. 20, 1862, Sanford Letter Book.

the vessel so she could be taken.[1] There is nothing to indicate, however, that the suggestion or propositions made were ever followed up.[2]

Sanford would have liked to have widened and made more effective the work which he was doing by subsidizing the foreign press in an attempt to swing government and public opinion in favor of the northern cause, but the apathy of the administration and the limited resources at his disposal made this impossible. In fact, the secret service fund was so meagre that in March, 1862, he suggested that if it were not increased it might better be dropped altogether.[3] As early as September 27, Sanford had written to Seward proposing that steps be taken to influence the European press. He believed that "a fire in the rear" could be raised against the proclivities of the governing class in England by stirring up the anti-slavery feeling. In November he declared that in France the drift was all against us. Prince Napoleon appeared to be the only one at court sympathetic with the northern side. The opinion was that the North was not in earnest and would soon abandon the contest. A month later he reported that the seizure of the *Trent* had lowered our stock not only in France and England, but in Belgium as well.[4] To him it

[1] Sanford to Seward(?), Apr. 1, 1862, *ibid.*

[2] In August, 1862, Sanford renewed the suggestion of bargaining with the Europeans who sold and shipped to the Confederacy. "It is worth your while," he said, "to *purchase* matériel of war in this way. There can be no possible loss to us." Sanford to Seward, Aug. 13, 1862, Sanford MSS.

[3] Sanford to Seward, Mar. 20, 1862, *ibid.* The disbursements for secret service work up to January 21, 1862, totaled £1820. Two hundred pounds of this had been given to Thurlow Weed to use when he was in England, and Sanford reported "He has been doing a good work with it." Sanford to Seward, Jan. 23, 1862, *ibid.*

[4] Sanford to Seward, Dec. 9, 1861, Sanford Letter Press Book; *ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1862, Sanford MSS.; *ibid.*, Nov. 12, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 631-632.

seemed imperative that the government obtain an organ through which it might repel the attacks of the hostile press of England and France and give light on our own affairs. For this purpose he thought the *Independence Belge* was admirably fitted. It had a wide circulation and was a journal of influence. Also he suggested the need of a bureau of correspondence at Paris to disburse information to the European press,[1] but none of his proposals were followed up with any vigor by the home authorities. From time to time during 1862, he renewed his appeals but without avail.[2]

[1] Sanford to Seward, Dec. 9, 1861, *loc. cit.*

[2] In August and September, 1862, Sanford visited England, France and Germany and reported on the attitude of public opinion, the industrial effects of the war and the activities of Confederate agents in France and England. What he observed led him to urge more strongly than ever the necessity for the United States government to exert itself in influencing foreign opinion. His letter of September 15 is worth quoting in part: "If we lose New Orleans, my belief is that the South will be recognised by France. The belief among most I converse with is that the Emperor is coquetting for a port held in Louisiana, that the possible idea of winning back an ancient French possession from Republicanism would be a glorious thing and would give him strength in Europe. I have been struck lately with the position of the imperial press, which is all hostile to us, in seeking to excite French sympathies in favor of the South —— on the plea that this is a struggle between Franco-Latin race on one side and the Anglo-Saxon race on the other side.

"I cannot too earnestly invite your attention to the necessity of prompt and vigorous means with regard to the press in Paris. It is the principal point for us to work on public opinion; it is already too late to attempt to get up a party amongst the Government, but the liberal party of France are our friends in principle. Why not stimulate them to work for us? I have already told you what I had agreed to do with respect to one writer, but I feel hesitation about going further or getting myself involved in outlay or obligation without knowing precisely what your views are. If you wish me to go on in this field, send me means and say so. Our true policy now is to appeal to the only friends we have in Europe, the people; we can from among them build a party in France which will make us feared, and compel inaction at least in our affairs.

John Bigelow was sent to Paris in the fall of 1861 principally to "look after the press of France," [1] and in one instance the War Department gave a statement to the Associated Press to be used for propaganda purposes in Europe, but that appears to have been about all that was done.[2]

Shortly after taking over the War Office in January, 1862, Secretary Stanton, believing that the urgent necessities that had required foreign purchases no longer obtained, promulgated sweeping orders putting an end to the work. All agencies, authorities, orders and licenses were revoked and persons holding contracts, agreements or the like were obliged to give prompt notification in writing for the same.[3] Thus the Confederates were given a much wider field in buying and contracting so long as their cash or credit in European bank-

At present the liberal press has no stimulus to take active steps for or against the partizan.

"One year ago, I urged this course with respect to the anti-slavery party in England—the time for action there by that means is past, but here on the continent it is not, and this people, who are our friends and who make revolutions can still be stirred up into a formidable power against the party who would see Republicanism crippled, if not crushed. ... All the brain in Paris, that is not under pay of the Emperor is with us, and can be roused for us—by activity, some little money and mere politeness and attention. It makes me ache to see how aimlessly we are drifting along there. We have a cause which appeals to every Frenchman, save the fossil Bourbons. Why not stir up that chivalrous French spirit to open partizanship for us, and against the detestable doctrine of Rebellion?" Sanford to Seward, Sept. 15, 1862; also letters of Aug. 13, and Sept. 16, 1862, Sanford MSS.

[1] Bigelow, John, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, vol. i, p. 365.

[2] Scott to D. H. Craig, Oct. 31, 1861, enclosure, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 612.

[3] Stanton's order, Jan. 29, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 869-870. The War Department found itself obliged to do some purchasing in Europe after this ban had been announced, but by the end of 1862, measures had been adopted so that it was expected that it would soon be totally independent of the European market. Stanton's report, Dec. 1, 1862, *House Exec. Doc.* No. 1, 37th Cong., 3rd Sess., p. 14.

ing houses held out, and were permitted to take their chances on running the federal blockade.[1] As the war progressed, the cordon of vessels along the coast became more effective and efficient, making entry into southern ports less easy, but it is true also that the industrial facilities of the Confederacy under the stress of necessity developed rapidly and helped to make the new nation more self-sustaining.[2] The golden opportunity for the North to cut off supplies, cripple the South and probably end the war was in the first twelve or fifteen months of fighting, but this the administration failed to see and appreciate adequately. If this severance of the South from an important base of supplies was a mighty factor in bringing the Confederacy to its knees in the latter part of the struggle, as was surely the case, it seems certain that it could have been equally or more effective in the early period.

[1] In his letter to Seward of Aug. 13, 1862, Sanford said that it was estimated that $30,000,000 worth of goods were at that time on the high seas. *Loc. cit.*

[2] Davis, Jefferson, *Short History of the Confederate States of America*, pp. 115-120; *Rise and Fall of the Confederacy*, vol. ii, p. 17. Benjamin to Davis, Feb. —, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. iv, vol. i, p. 959. Benjamin said: "It will hereafter be in the power of the department to furnish all that is required, not only from supplies of blankets, cloth and shoes already imported from Europe, but from the production of manufacturing establishments at home."

CHAPTER XI

Army Problems

As though the incapacities and difficulties in the War Department, the conflicts in recruiting, the shortages of arms and *matériel* and the dissensions in public affairs were not enough to fill Lincoln's cup abrim, there was the added burden and anxiety of inadequate and overcautious military leadership. Six months of war and mounting debts and not a signal victory to show for it!

Bull Run had discredited McDowell, quite unjustly perhaps, yet it was so. Old General Scott's day was done. The weight of years rested heavily upon him; an injury three years earlier had left him unable to mount a horse, and he could walk only a few paces at a time. Dropsy and vertigo added further to his discomfort.[1] However, his mind was clear and his military judgments were still to be reckoned with. In the West Grant was still in comparative obscurity; Lyon, a promising young commander, was killed in battle at Wilson's Creek in August; Curtis, Hunter, Thomas, Halleck and others had yet to prove themselves; Sherman was chafing over his needs and on the verge of a physical breakdown;[2] Frémont was almost daily demonstrating his unfitness for the important post he occupied.

McClellan alone had shown real promise of leadership. At a time when the North was barren of victories his

[1] Scott to Cameron, Oct. 31, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.

[2] Halleck to McClellan, Dec. 2, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. lii, part i, p. 198.

showy skirmishes in western Virginia stood out brilliantly. In the weeks that followed the unceremonious retreat of Union troops from the field at Manassas, the eyes of the nation had been riveted upon, and its hopes had been centered in, him. The "Young Napoleon" men fondly called him. He had taken hold of the disorganized remnant of the Bull Run forces and the fresh three-year recruits who came to him and was rapidly whipping them into shape.

At times during August McClellan talked as though he meant action, swift and decisive,[1] but as the days and weeks passed, the prospect of it diminished. His caution got the better of him as it had done before and as it was to do again. He feared defeat and the loss of men. Obstacles were magnified until they became impossibilities. His mind conjured up an enemy of great and overwhelming proportions, far in excess of what it really was. He complained continually of the shortcomings of his own army and pleaded for more men, more arms, more equipment. September 8 he wrote Cameron that the Confederates could probably bring 130,000 men against his 85,000, of whom only 70,000 or 60,000 were effective troops.[2] Under such circumstances McClellan said he must rely on superior generalship; he thought the best officers should be with the Army of the Potomac.[3]

By the end of October he estimated that to render victory reasonably certain not less than 150,000 men and

[1] *Vide*, p. 198.

[2] McClellan to Cameron, Sept. 8, 1861, McClellan MSS. The Confederate army opposing McClellan appears to have had considerably less than 50,000 men at this time. A request to President Davis for 50,000 or 60,000 men in all was found impossible to comply with. Johnston, Joseph E., *A Narrative of Military Operations during the Late War between the States*, p. 76.

[3] McClellan to Cameron, Sept. 8, 1861, *loc. cit.*

400 guns would be needed for the offensive and 35,000 more for guarding the capital. He claimed to have only 76,285 troops and 228 field guns for the advance, and contended that all the cavalry and infantry arms as rapidly as received from home and abroad should be sent to his army. New batteries and new regiments of infantry should be made up as quickly as possible and all battalions now raised for new regiments of regular infantry should be ordered at once to his army. His force, he said, really ought to have 208,000 effective soldiers.[1]

So much did the administration rely upon McClellan that it was inclined to neglect other regions to supply him. Lincoln, Chase, Cameron, Seward and the governors were all dancing attendance upon him and trying to meet his wants. Believing the Union was on the eve of a great battle, Cameron wrote to him on September 7, saying: "Its success must depend upon you, and the means that may be placed at your disposal. Impressed with this belief and anxious to aid you with all the powers of my Department, I will be glad if you will inform me how I can do so."[2] That as much was not done as he desired was, of course, due in large measure to the shortcomings of the War Department, but the facilities which McClellan possessed and the numbers at his command were so much greater than those of his opponents that he cannot be relieved of the charge of over-cautiousness on that account.

Like Frémont McClellan was insatiable in his demands. The extraordinary swiftness of his rise to high command either "turned his head" or gave him a dis-

[1] McClellan's memorandum for the Secretary of War, Oct. 30, 1861, McClellan MSS.

[2] Cameron to McClellan, Sept. 7, 1861, *ibid.*

torted notion as to what he had a right to expect and ask for. He became utterly intolerant, impatient, disrespectful and contemptuous of his superiors. His letters to his wife were filled with bitter fulminations.[1] He had been in Washington only a few days when be began to disagree with and heap opprobrium upon General Scott because the old chief refused to acknowledge that the capital was in imminent danger of capture. August 8 he wrote to Mrs. McClellan:

Came back and had a long interview with Seward about my "pronunciamento" against Gen'l Scott's policy—How does he think I can save this country when stopped by Gen'l Scott? I do not know whether he is a *dotard* or a *traitor!* I can't tell which. He *cannot* or *will not* comprehend the condition in which we are placed and is certainly unequal to the emergency. If he cannot be taken out of my path I will not retain my position but resign. . . . If Beauregard does not attack tonight I shall look upon it as a dispensation of Providence. He *ought* to do it. Every day strengthens me. I am leaving nothing undone to increase my force, but that confounded old Gen'l always comes in my way. He is a perfect incubus. He understands nothing, appreciates nothing. . . .[2]

The next day came more of the same abuse and self-revelation:

General Scott is the great obstacle—he will not comprehend the danger and is either a traitor or an incompetent. I have to fight my way against him and have thrown a bomb shell that has created a perfect stampede in the cabinet—tomorrow the question will probably be decided by giving me absolute control

[1] McClellan's *Own Story* contains some of these. Many others are to be found in his Letter Book, 1861–1862, Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts.

[2] McClellan to his wife, Aug. 8, 1861, Letter Book, 1861–1862, McClellan MSS.

independently of him. I suppose it will result in a mortal enmity on his part against me—but I have no choice—the people call upon me to save the country—I *must* save it and cannot respect anything that is in the way. I receive letter after letter —have conversation after conversation calling on me to save the country—alluding to the Presidency, Dictatorship, etc. As I hope one day to be united with you forever in heaven, I have no such aspiration. I will never accept the Presidency—I would cheerfully accept the Dictatorship and agree to lay down my life when the country is saved. I am not spoiled by my new and unexpected position.[1]

McClellan counted Scott his "most dangerous antagonist."[2] Presently he suspected other antagonists and began to direct his shafts of invective and vituperation against Lincoln and the Cabinet as well. August 16 he wrote: "The Presdt is an idiot, the old General in his dotage—they cannot or will not see the true state of affairs."[3] September 27 he reported having met the Cabinet, Lincoln and Scott. "Before we got through," he wrote, "the general 'raised a row with me'. I kept cool. In the course of the conversation he very strongly intimated that we were no longer friends."[4] Every day brought the executive branch of the government lower in his estimation. It was "an imbecile administration" and retarded his progress.[5] Seward who more than any other had the young commander's confidence a few weeks earlier[6] now became the most reviled and contemptible of all:

[1] McClellan to his wife, Aug. 9, 1861, *ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1861.

[3] *Ibid.*, Aug. 16, 1861.

[4] *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1861.

[5] *Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1861.

[6] Welles, Narrative of Events Commencing March 6, 1861, MS.

I can't tell you how disgusted I am becoming with these wretched politicians—they are a most despicable set of men and I think Seward is the meanest of them all—a meddlesome, officious, incompetent little puppy—he has done more than any other one man to bring all this misery upon the country and is one of the least competent to get us out of the scrape. The Presdt. is nothing more than a well meaning baboon. Welles is weaker than the most garrulous old woman you were ever annoyed by. Bates is a good unoffensive old man—so it goes. . . . I believe I have choked off Seward already and have strong hopes that he will keep himself to his business hereafter.[1]

In November he added: "But it is terrible to stand by in the cowardice of the Presdt, the vileness of Seward and the rascality of Cameron—Welles is an old woman—Bates an old fool. The only man of courage and sense the Cabinet is Blair, and I don't altogether fancy him."[2]

His evening calls afforded him new ammunition for his "fire in the rear." November 17 he went to the White House after tea where he found "'the original gorilla' about as intelligent as ever—what a specimen to be at the head of our affairs now!" Later he called at Seward's and "found the 'gorilla' again, and was of course much edified by his anecdotes—ever apropos, and ever unworthy of one holding his high position." He stayed some time and "*almost* organized a little quarrel with the poor little wretch Seward . . . " because Seward discredited some information which he had just received. "It is a terrible dispensation of Providence," he wrote, "that so weak and cowardly a thing as that should control our foreign relations—unhappily the Presdt is not much better, except he is honest and means well."[3]

[1] McClellan to his wife, Oct. —, 1861, Letter Book, *loc. cit.*

[2] *Ibid.*, Nov. —, 1861.

[3] *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1861.

Had McClellan been more discerning he would have discovered that Lincoln was the best friend he had in Washington, and that it was not the Cabinet that merited his abuse, but a little coterie of hot-heads in Congress. The same impetuous, belligerent element at the Capitol that had helped to force Bull Run so soon forgot the lesson of that July day that they were again at work attempting to force the hand of the military. Wade, Chandler and Trumbull were the ring-leaders. Lincoln had given offense to the rabid Republican, Chandler, by putting McClellan, a Democrat, in active charge of the Potomac forces after Bull Run.[1] Again, he had incurred Chandler's wrath and Wade's too when he refused to adopt their suggestion of enlisting negro soldiers.[2] And he had aggravated them deeply when in September he modified Frémont's proclamation freeing the slaves of all actively disloyal Missourians.[3] Frémont was the pet of the radical Republicans and abolition was part of their creed.

Presently Wade, Chandler and Trumbull took it upon themselves to stir things up—to get the army moving. Lincoln was too easy-going; Cameron and his bureau chiefs were too inert and acquiescent. Because McClellan had not advanced, the Senate clique thought he was doing nothing; he was wasting time and money, and something ought to be done about it. On the evening of October 26 Wade, Chandler and Trumbull called at the White House "to worry the Administration into a battle," but they obtained no satisfaction for their

[1] Stephenson, *Lincoln*, p. 192.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[3] *Detroit Post and Tribune, Life of Zachariah Chandler*, p. 222; *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, p. 467.

trouble. The President defended McClellan's deliberation in creating an efficient army.[1]

From the White House they repaired to Montgomery Blair's. He was always in favor of action. Had he not been raging against the docility and incapacity of the old general-in-chief ever since June? McClellan was at Blair's house that evening. The five men proceeded to hold a council of war. Wade spoke up and declared the army ought to fight; an unsuccessful battle would at least have the merit of bringing out a swarm of fresh recruits. Was it not so after Bull Run? There was no denying of that. The general absolved himself by cleverly contending that Scott was the obstacle to action. Get rid of him and the troops would move. The conference lasted three hours. At one-fifteen o'clock in the morning McClellan wrote home: "They will make a desperate effort tomorrow to have Gen. Scott retired at once. . . ."[2]

The next night, October 27, Wade and Chandler went to Seward's, probably with the intention of pushing matters through him. Lincoln and young John Hay came in while they were there. The talk of the night before was repeated. It was the old "Forward to Richmond" cry resurrected and reiterated. Action was the thing! A defeat was better than no movement at all.[3]

Lincoln remained immovable, but he recognized that popular clamor must be taken into account and told McClellan so.[4] However, Bull Run was still too fresh in his memory to permit another precipitate movement.

[1] Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, p. 467; McClellan's *Own Story*, p. 171.

[3] Stephenson, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[4] *Ibid.*

October 27 he said to the young commander: "General, you must not fight until you are ready."[1]

The pressure for the retirement of Scott seems to have borne fruit. On October 31 he gave notice of his intention to quit the service.[2]

In the agitation going on the name of the Secretary of War does not appear. There is no evidence that the "war horses" called upon him; if they did, nothing of consequence seems to have come of it. Cameron had been one of their yoke-fellows in the Buchanan administration,[3] but now his influence counted for little in war matters. During August and early September, 1861, he had been in a political eclipse as a result of the storm that had been raised against his wretched management of affairs. He could with ill grace criticize McClellan for inaction when he himself had given so poor a demonstration of activity.

And then Cameron was too shrewd a politician to risk anything in a controversy with the popular young general.[4] Furthermore Cameron never feigned to know much about strategy and army management; he did not bother with that sort of things any more than was necessary. He usually gave McClellan first call on whatever troops, supplies and equipment were available and did not attempt to interfere or dictate as to what should be done with them. McClellan in turn paid slight defer-

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*

[2] Scott to Cameron, Oct. 31, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.

[3] Harris, Wilmer C., *Public Life of Zachariah Chandler*, p. 48.

[4] When General Scott complained to Cameron of McClellan's ignoring him in military matters and remonstrated against the junior officer's carrying on correspondence directly with the Secretary of War and the President, the Secretary did not interfere. Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 463–464.

ence to him. It took the energetic Stanton—"the black terrier," as Montgomery Blair called him—to put an end to the "champagne and oysters on the Potomac."[1]

Cameron was probably not in very good standing with the triumvirate at this time. Indeed, he had never been in the good graces of Trumbull. He must have given offense to them when he and Adjutant-General Thomas after a visit of inspection to the West roundly denounced the state of affairs in Frémont's department, and again a little later when he voiced opposition to the appointment of a joint Congressional committee on the conduct of the war.[2] The Secretary knew that the chaos in the West was injurious to himself, and therefore wanted to be rid of the general.[3] And the proposed committee was certain to be a "smelling committee" like the one investigating contracts.

The retirement of General Scott paved the way for McClellan to gain complete military control, and on November 1 he announced that in accordance with War Department orders he was to command all the armies of the United States.[4] No longer could he lay at the door of the old chief the blame for the inertia of the Army of the Potomac. It was expected by the Senate cabal that he would move. And Lincoln was hopeful of the same

[1] Stanton wrote to Charles A. Dana on January 24, 1862, saying, "As soon as I can get the machinery of the office going, the rats cleared out, and the rat holes stopped, we shall *move*. *This army has got to fight or run away; and while men are striving nobly in the West, the champagne and oysters on the Potomac must be stopped.*" Flower, *Stanton*, p. 125.

[2] *Detroit Post and Tribune, Chandler*, p. 217.

[3] The *New York Evening Express*, December 14, 1861, declared that Cameron gave to the press Adjutant-General Thomas' private memorandum exposing the disgraceful condition of Frémont's department in order to get Frémont "out of the way."

[4] General Order No. 19, Nov. 1, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 613.

thing.[1] But there was really less likelihood of his advance now than there had been before. Although he had told Cameron in October that he intended to strike Johnston at Manassas,[2] at the end of the month he wrote a memorandum for the Secretary saying that he must choose between going into winter quarters and assuming the offensive with forces greatly inferior to the enemy.[3] Two other factors entered in to deter him. In a small battle at Ball's Bluff on the Potomac, October 21, a contingent of the Union forces was badly beaten; gloom spread over the North; "a fatal hesitation took possession of McClellan." Secondly, the elevation to general-in-chief put upon him the responsibility for all the troops, East and West.[4] Instead of executing the plan he had, he began to formulate a new one which would cause a delay of all eastern operations until the spring of 1862. It meant moving the bulk of his army down the Chesapeake Bay and the beginning of a peninsula campaign, say, in March.[5]

Through November the drilling went on; McClellan became more confirmed in the wisdom of the new policy, hoping on November 25 that the driving snowstorm of the day would obstruct the roads so as to render certain

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 467. November 11 the President told McClellan that he thought it "a good time to feel the enemy." The general replied that he intended to do so the next day. But he did not.

[2] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. iii, p. 382.

[3] Memorandum for the Secretary of War, Oct. 30, 1861, McClellan MSS. General Johnston says the Confederate force capable of bearing arms against McClellan's army numbered 41,000 at this time. *Narrative of Military Operations*, p. 81.

[4] Rhodes, *op. cit.*, p. 385; Swinton, *Army of the Potomac*, p. 70.

[5] Ropes, John C., "General McClellan's Plans," *Campaigns in Virginia*, 1861–1862, p. 61 (Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, vol. i, Dwight, Theodore F., ed.).

a decision against an advance.[1] December 10, in response to a series of questions put to him by the President, he let it be known that he had "now in mind actually turned toward another plan of campaign, that I do not think at all anticipated by the enemy, nor many of our own people."[2] About the same time he fell ill with typhoid fever and the delay he desired became a necessity.

By the time Congress convened the radical Republicans and a great many others too, were beside themselves with indignation over the inactivity of the army and the disaster at Ball's Bluff. On the opening day, December 2, Roscoe Conkling offered a resolution requesting "the Secretary of War, if not incompatible with the public service to report to the House whether any, and if any, what, measures have been taken to ascertain who is responsible for the disastrous movement of our troops at Ball's Bluff." The measure passed without a dissenting voice.[3] In the Senate, Grimes offered a substitute which, after modification directed the appointment of a "joint committee of three members of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives to inquire into the conduct of the present war, and that they have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during the sessions of either House of Congress."[4] The joint resolution was adopted by an overwhelming vote in the Senate and passed the House unanimously.[5] Thus the Committee on the Conduct of the War came into being. Wade was made chairman and Chandler one of its members.

[1] Rhodes, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

[2] Swinton, *op. cit.*, p. 71, footnote.

[3] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 40.

Neither Lincoln, Cameron nor McClellan wanted a fifth wheel to the coach but they had been powerless to prevent it.[1] As for the Conkling resolution of inquiry, Cameron set out to beat it. He replied that McClellan was of the opinion "that an inquiry on the subject of the resolution would, at this time, be injurious to the public service."[2] But Conkling would not be put off so readily. He declared the communication was unsatisfactory and offered another resolution directing the Secretary to return a further answer.[3] Cameron evaded again, this time putting the responsibility for silence upon the administration by saying that "measures have been taken to ascertain who is responsible for the disastrous movement of our troops at Ball's Bluff, but it is not deemed compatible with the public interest to make known those measures at the present time."[4]

The House could go no further, but the new Committee on the Conduct of the War was ready to go the limit. It began at once to hale the generals before it for questioning. With Chandler and Wade, than whom there were no more intemperate partisans in Congress, managing the inquisition, no one could expect judicial inquiries. And they were not gotten. Chandler and Wade regarded "Ben" Butler as a hero and McClellan as a traitorous rascal; the majority report had only apologies and praise for the performances of Frémont![5] The Committee had no very direct effect upon the War Department before Cameron's exit in January, and in its report subsequently quite studiously avoided censuring

[1] *Detroit Post and Tribune*, *loc. cit.*, p. 217.

[2] *Cong. Globe*, *loc. cit.*, p. 191.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

[5] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, pp. 3–6.

him personally. But the testimony it brought out concerning Bull Run and Ball's Bluff was damning enough to discredit the military administration of which he was a leader.

In spite of Cameron's weaknesses and the many shortcomings still pervading the bureaus of the War Department, as the year drew toward a close it was apparent that the central government had at last crowded out the states pretty largely in the management of the war. The governors clung tenaciously to all their lawful rights, but their power and influence in military affairs diminished considerably. The passing of the militia, the larger federal control of volunteers, the presence of over a half million men in service, the increased and more experienced personnel in the Washington offices and the gradually increasing quantities of *matériel* were principally responsible for this. Again, the federal authorities must have seen the necessity for controlling war management if duplication, interference and antagonism were to be brought to an end.

The centralizing of purchasing in the War Department, the requests to the governors to recall their purchasing agents and the seizure of arms imported were also steps in the direction of national control.[1] Another came on December 3 when McClellan issued orders drawn by the War Office which completely revised the recruiting service. They put an end to the raising of all regiments, batteries and independent companies by the governors except upon special requisition of the department. The recruiting service in the several states was, after January 1, 1862, to be in the charge of superintendents who would assemble recruits at the general depots in the several states. There the men would be

[1] *Vide*, pp.259-260, 278-279.

clothed from federal stores and instructed by trained volunteers. To keep the ranks in the field up to quota, recruiting parties from each regiment were to travel about enlisting men and sending them in groups to points of rendezvous.[1]

It was quite inevitable that before the war progressed very far the questions of fugitive slaves and emancipation should arise to plague the government. However, the President was eager to avoid them, for it was plainly impossible to act in such a way as to please both the Abolitionist element of the North and those who were interested in warring only for the preservation of the Union. Again, in his inaugural he had given assurance to the southern states that the accession of a Republican administration to power did not mean that their property, peace and personal security were to be endangered. He reminded them that in one of his published speeches he had said: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so."[2] For several months Lincoln kept in the background on the slavery question, but it was not possible for the War and Navy Departments to follow suit. Very early commanders in the field presented to them for advice and guidance

[1] General Order No. 105, Dec. 3, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 722–723. Governor Morgan wrote to the Secretary of War, December 24, objecting to this order. "Until this State has faltered in her duty the agents elected by the people, it seems to me, can properly be permitted to act as a medium through which the Government obtained its volunteers." He feared the new recruiting system would prove unsuccessful and asked that the order be rescinded. Cameron declined to do this. Morgan to Cameron, Dec. 24, 1861; Cameron to Morgan, Dec. 26, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 758–759, 760–761.

[2] *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. vi, p. 5.

problems regarding fugitive slaves. Without a definite administration policy and legal provisions Cameron and Welles had to act as circumstances seemed to dictate. Neither shrank from the task, but, says Welles, "in the conflict of authorities between the States and the General Government, the consequent quasi suspension of the laws and the unsettled condition of affairs, no more was put on paper than was necessary." [1]

Cameron had never been an Abolitionist; he was not a believer in "Irrepressible Conflict," but had joined the Republicans in the Kansas controversy more from opposition to Buchanan than from devotion to principle. His antecedents as a conservative had been one of the things which at the outset had commended him to a large body of the northern people as a suitable Secretary of War.[2] Nor did he show any especial tendency to "mount the nigger hobby", as Montgomery Blair phrased it, in the early days of the war. April 29, in response to an inquiry from a negro, he declared that his department had no intention at that time to call into service any colored soldiers.[3]

His first pronouncement on the question of returning fugitive slaves came at the end of May in response to a letter from General Butler at Fort Monroe. Prior to that time, however, at least three actions had been taken on slave questions by commanders, and these quite independent of the Washington authorities. April 23 Butler tendered to Governor Hicks the service of his forces to put down "promptly and effectively" any slave insurrection which might arise in the state of Maryland.[4]

[1] Welles, "History of Emancipation," *Galaxy*, vol. xiv, p. 839.

[2] Welles, Narrative of Events, MS.; *New York Herald*, Jan. 15, 1862.

[3] Cameron to J. Dodson, Apr. 29, 1861, Military Book No. 43, MSS.

[4] Butler to Hicks, Apr. 23, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 593.

May 14, in reply to an inquiry from a citizen of Missouri as to whether the federal government proposed to protect negro property, General Harney declared that while he had no special instruction from the Secretary of War on the subject, "I should as soon expect to hear that the orders of the Government were directed toward the overthrow of any other kind of property as of this in negro slaves." He added that where fugitives had sought refuge in army camps they had been carefully returned to their owners.[1] About two weeks later, as he was about to advance into western Virginia, McClellan announced to the Unionists in that section that not only would he abstain from interfering with their slaves but he would "with an iron hand, crush any attempt at insurrection on their part."[2] In none of these instances does Cameron seem to have intervened, perhaps because the matters were not laid before him.

In Butler's case at Fort Monroe the issue was placed squarely before the Washington authorities. On May 23 three negro field-hands, property of a Confederate colonel, Mallory, then in charge of secession forces in the Fort Monroe district, delivered themselves up to Butler's picket guard and were detained. The fugitives had fled because they were about to be taken "to Carolina" for the purpose of aiding Confederate forces there. As he was seriously in need of labor in his quartermaster department, the general decided, until better advised, to avail himself of their services and to so inform Mallory. The colonel's emissary met Butler on the 24th and de-

[1] Harney to T. T. Gantt, May 14, 1861, The Negro in the United States Military Service, vol. ii, MSS. This series of volumes, to be found in the adjutant-general's section of the Old Records Division of the War Department, consists of typed copies of a large number of letters, documents, etc., relating to the negro problem during the war.

[2] McClellan's proclamation, May 26, 1861, *ibid.*

sired to know if the general did not feel himself bound by his constitutional obligations to deliver up fugitives under the Fugitive Slave Act. To this Butler with characteristic shrewdness replied that these slaves were "contraband of war"[1] and

> . . . that the fugitive-slave act did not affect a foreign country, which Virginia claimed to be, and that she must reckon it one of the infelicities of her position that in so far at least she was taken at her word; that in Maryland, a loyal State, fugitives from service had been returned, and that even now, although so much pressed by my necessities for the use of these men of Colonel Mallory's, yet if their master would come to the fort and take the oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States I would deliver the men up to him and endeavor to hire their services of him if he desired to part with them.[2]

Because this case was only "an individual instance in a course of policy which may be required to be pursued with regard to this species of property," Butler submitted it to General Scott and asked his directions. He added that he was credibly informed that the negroes in the neighborhood were being used by the enemy in the construction of batteries and other fortifications. "Shall they be allowed to use this property against the United States, and we not be allowed its use in aid of the United States?"[3]

On May 27 Butler wrote again, saying the question of slave property was becoming one of "very serious magnitude." Escapes from enforced war labor for the

[1] Randall, James G., *Constitutional Problems under Lincoln*, pp. 355–356, footnote, has a brief account concerning the origin of the term "contraband of war" as applied to fugitive slaves.

[2] Butler to Scott, May 24–25, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 649–650.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 650.

Confederacy were numerous; fugitives were entering the general's camp, bringing with them their women and children. At the time of writing he had negro "property" which "in good times" would be valued at $60,000. Since women and children could not be dealt with on the "contraband" theory he was in doubt what to do with them. For the present he was employing the able-bodied persons, issuing food to all, and charging the expense of care and sustenance of the non-laborers to the wage accounts of the workers. He had no doubt as to the wisdom of his course from the humanitarian aspect, but felt he had no right to judge of the political side of the question. Hence his appeal to his chief and the Secretary of War for counsel.[1]

At first, Blair says, the old general was inclined to order Butler to change his course, but presently found the situation humorous, and made merry over what he termed "Butler's fugitive slave law."[2] The Secretary, upon learning of Butler's problem, conferred with Chase who held strong anti-slavery views. The latter then put his views on the matter in the form of a letter.[3] On the 29th Scott submitted Butler's first letter to Cameron with the endorsement: "There is much to praise in this report and nothing to condemn. It is highly interesting . . . particularly in its relation to the slave question." The Secretary added: "I agree with the Lieutenant General in his entire approval of the within report."[4] The Postmaster General was also pleased, writing Butler on the same day, " . . . you were right

[1] Butler to Scott, May 27, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 53.

[2] M. Blair to Butler, May 29, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 116.

[3] Chase to J. T. Trowbridge, Mar. 31, 1864, Schuckers, *Chase*, p. 420.

[4] *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. ii, p. 652.

when you declared secession niggers contraband of war." He thought the general's plan could be improved upon, however, by returning all non-laborers to the enemy so that the burden of their support would not rest upon the Unionists.[1]

The President appears not to have taken the subject so lightly as the rest. He recognized its seriousness, and declared it required thought in view of the number of negroes who were likely to seek refuge in northern lines as a consequence of Butler's "new doctrine". The question was to be taken up in Cabinet meeting on May 30.[2]

The meeting seems to have resolved for the present at least, in favor of General Butler's course, for the Secretary of War wrote him as follows:

> Your action in respect to the negroes who come within your lines from the service of the rebels is approved.
>
> The Department is sensible of the embarrassments which must surround officers conducting military operations in a State by the laws of which slavery is sanctioned.
>
> The Government cannot recognize the rejection by any State of its Federal obligations, nor can it refuse the performance of the Federal obligations resting upon itself. Among these Federal obligations, however, no one can be more important than that of suppressing and dispersing armed combinations formed for the purpose of overthrowing its whole constitutional authority.
>
> While, therefore you will permit no interference by the persons under your command with the relations of persons held to service under the laws of any State, you will, on the other hand, so long as any State within which your military operations are conducted is under the control of such armed

[1] Blair to Butler, May 29, 1861, Butler, *op. cit.*

[2] *Ibid.*

combinations, refrain from surrendering to alleged masters any persons who may come within your lines. You will employ such persons in the services to which they are best adapted, keeping an account of the labor by them performed, of the value of it and the expense of their maintenance. The question of their final disposition will be reserved for future determination.[1]

The letter was Chase's, slightly modified by Camèron.[2] It met the situation, reasonably satisfied the northern people and kept pretty well within the Constitution and the law.

The question of the disposition of fugitives did not remain settled long. Wherever the armies went it arose and could not be ignored. Commanders soon made manifest that they had notions of their own as to the course to be pursued, and the President himself disliked the idea of negroes residing in the army camps.[3]

Early in June when Patterson was ready to advance from Pennsylvania upon Harper's Ferry in western Virginia, he proclaimed to his troops: "You must bear in mind that you are going for the good of the whole country, and that, while it is your duty to punish sedition, you must protect the loyal, and should the occasion offer, at once suppress servile insurrection."[4] On

[1] Cameron to Butler, May 30, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 243.

[2] Chase to Trowbridge, Mar. 31, 1864, Butler, *op. cit.*

[3] Browning, Diary, July 8, 1861, MS. Browning says that he and the President in a discussion of the negro question agreed "that the government neither should nor would send back to bondage such as came to our armies, but that we could not have them in camp, and that they must take care of themselves till the war is over, and then colonize &c." The President must have been referring to fugitives from secessionist masters for he was bound by the fugitive slave law in other cases.

[4] Patterson's proclamation, June 3, 1861, The Negro in the United States Military Service, *loc. cit.*

July 4 Colonel Tyler of the Ohio Seventh made a speech to a secessionist audience in western Virginia in which he assured his hearers that the relation of master and slaves as recognized in Virginia would be respected, and to this end his troops had received peremptory orders "to take up and hold any negroes found running about the camp without passes from their masters."[1] Presumably this meant that such slaves would be delivered to the owners upon claim.

A week later the administration itself was confronted with the fugitive slave issue in an embarrassing way. Slaves in the District of Columbia began to cross the Potomac into McDowell's lines. There they were sheltered by officers who welcomed their services as servants.[2] Should the government restore negroes to bondage in the very sight of the capitol, or should they be left with the army? There was danger of opposition from the Abolitionists if the former course was pursued, but since these refugees were neither "contraband" nor confiscated rebel property, and therefore were subject to the Fugitive Slave Act, the President resolved to meet the issue and effect their return to their masters. But to avoid an outburst from the Abolitionists, and to attach as little censure upon the administration as possible, it was decided to do it very quietly. July 11 an order went forward from Assistant Adjutant-General Townsend to McDowell in this form:

> The General-in-Chief directs me to say that he has been informed by high authority of the presence of several runaway slaves in the different camps in your department, and he has been instructed to have them returned to their owners.

[1] Williams, George W., *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion*, pp. 72–73.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, p. 390.

The General is unwilling to give prominence to his authority in this delicate matter, and he desires you to manage it quietly, and to have the slaves found out and sent back to this city; also to prevent any more passing over or being harbored.[1]

That same day Townsend informed General Mansfield, in command of the District of Washington, that by order of General Scott he must take "stringent measures to prevent fugitive slaves from passing over the river, particularly with the regiments ordered over."[2]

Five days later another message was sent to McDowell telling him that Scott was in receipt of a second note from the President in which he asked: "Would it not be well to allow owners to bring back those who have crossed?" In dealing with the matter, the message said, it was the general-in-chief's wish that "the name of the President should not at this time be brought before the public in connection with this delicate subject."[3] July 17 an order was issued by McDowell's adjutant prohibiting the harboring of fugitives in camp, or allowing them to accompany troops on the march.[4] An identical one was issued the same day by Mansfield,[5] thus indicating that both came from headquarters at Washington.

For a few days after this, the excitement of the Bull Run movements tended to obscure other problems, but General Butler soon brought the slave issue back to the fore in his usual blunt, forceful manner. In view of recent orders and events he desired fresh information as to what should be done with some 900 negro men,

[1] Townsend to McDowell, July 11, 1861, The Negro in the Military Service, vol. ii, MSS.

[2] Townsend to Mansfield, July 11, 1861, *ibid.*

[3] S. Hamilton to McDowell, July 16, 1861, *ibid.*

[4] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

[5] McPherson, *History of the Rebellion*, p. 245.

women and children within his lines, many of whom had been occupied in erecting entrenchments for him or performing menial services for his troops.

First, what shall be done with them? and, *Second*, What is their state and condition? Upon these questions I desire the instructions of the department. . . .

Are these men, women and children slave? Are they free? Is their condition that of men, women, and children, or of property, or is it a mixed relation? . . . Are they property? If they were so, they have been left by their masters and owners, deserted, thrown away, abandoned, like the wrecked vessel upon the ocean. . . . If property, do they not become the property of the salvors? But we, their salvors, do not need and will not hold such property, and will assume no such ownership: has not, therefore, all proprietary relations ceased? Have they not become, thereupon, men, women and children? . . .

Is it forbidden to the troops to aid or harbor within their lines the negro children who are found therein, or is the soldier, when his march has destroyed their means of subsistence, to allow them to starve because he has driven off the rebel masters? Now, shall the commander of a regiment or battalion sit in judgment upon the question, whether any given black man has fled from his master, or his master fled from him. Indeed, how are the free born to be distinguished?[1]

These were leading and puzzling questions and required artful dodgings if straightforward answers were not to be given. And Butler was not a man to be trifled with very readily. Cameron undoubtedly knew that the President did not wish to take any advanced stand on the slave issue. Lincoln's messages to Scott on July 11 and 16 indicated this, and in consultation with Sumner a few days after the Bull Run disaster the President had declined to resort to the full exercise

[1] Butler to Cameron, July 30, 1861, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, pp. 185–187.

of the war power in the direction of emancipation.[1] Under the circumstances the Secretary took counsel of Chase again and received from him suggestions which he adopted in his reply to Butler.[2] The letter to the general was not written until August 8, however, perhaps because Cameron was waiting for final action on the pending Confiscation Bill. It became law August 6, and provided that whenever "any person claimed to be held to labor or service under the law of any State, shall be required or permitted . . . to take up arms against the United States, or . . . to work or be employed . . . in any military or naval establishment whatsoever, against the Government and lawful authority of the United States . . . the person to whom such labor or service is claimed to be due shall forfeit his claim to such labor. . . ."[3] The law did not specifically state that slaves should be free, consequently Cameron was obliged to evade such a declaration in his reply to Butler.

In his letter the Secretary stressed that it was the President's desire that all constitutional rights of states and citizens of states in the Union should be observed. In states wholly or partly in rebellion, federal and state laws were for the time, of necessity, in abeyance; and in accordance with the Confiscation Act, if persons held to service were employed against the United States, the

[1] Lester, Charles E., *Life and Public Services of Charles Sumner*, pp. 356–357.

It should also be noted that on July 22 the House passed the Crittenden resolution which stated that the war was being waged for the upholding of the Constitution and the preservation of the Union only. Three days later it passed the Senate. In both bodies the vote was overwhelming in support of the measure. *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 222, 265.

[2] Chase to Trowbridge, Mar. 31, 1864, Schuckers, *Chase*, p. 420.

[3] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, p. 319.

rights to their services were forfeited. "It follows, of necessity, that no claim can be recognized by the military authorities of the Union to the services of such persons when fugitives." In the case of fugitives from loyal masters in seceded states, Cameron said, "it seems quite clear that the substantial rights of loyal masters will be best protected by receiving such fugitives, as well as fugitives from disloyal masters, into the service of the United States, and employing them under such organizations, and in such occupations as circumstances may suggest and require." Proper and detailed records of each person were to be kept so that suitable settlement could be made to loyal masters by Congress at the termination of hostilities.[1]

In effect the orders vested in the hands of the military the practical management of the problem and the power to decide into what particular class fugitives belonged. It is of interest to note also that they directed the receiving into military camps of a class of persons whom the President a few weeks earlier had been anxious to keep out. The whole arrangement was conservative and an attempt to hold back on the slavery issue. Upon reading Cameron's dispatch, General Butler exclaimed: "This is too ridiculous to be laughed at."[2] To his wife he wrote: "The reply of the Secretary, which you will see in the papers, is too namby pamby, and shows these people are not up to the occasion. I shall have to take issue with them. This war cannot go on without direct conflict. The negro will be free. It is inevitable."[3] The general did not have an opportunity to oppose the administration on the question, however, for he was

[1] Cameron to Butler, Aug. 8, 1861, Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–203.

[2] Lester, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

[3] Butler to his wife, Aug. 14, 1861, Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

superseded to make room for General Wool, and presently was sent up to New England where the imbroglio with Andrew soon occurred.

The entrusting of the management of the fugitive slave issue to the army, while perhaps almost inevitable, was unfortunate, for it led to a variety of actions. The commanders generally followed their own predilections, and these usually accorded with their political convictions.[1] On the day Cameron's letter went forward to General Butler, General Dix wrote concerning the case of three negroes who had escaped to his lines in Maryland from their disloyal owner in Virginia: "We would not meddle with slaves even of secessionists . . . we are neither negro-stealers nor negro-catchers."[2] Many of those who came to Wool at Fort Monroe were, by department orders, sent to Washington accompanied by their families for employment on military works; others were put to work at the fort and made to earn a livelihood for themselves and their dependents.[3] General Sickles, when left to his own devices, sometimes retained the "intelligent and well-behaved" fugitives for useful work. Those who were identified as belonging to persons in Maryland were excluded from his camps so that persons claiming them might assert their claims before state civil tribunals.[4] In September and October, in two or three instances, orders came from the headquarters of the Army

[1] General Butler was a notable exception.

[2] Dix to Cameron, Aug. 8, 1861, The Negro in the Military Service, vol. ii, MSS.

[3] Wool to Cameron, Sept. 18, 1861; Cameron to Wool, Sept. 20, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iv, pp. 614–615; Wool's special order No. 72, McPherson, *History of the Rebellion*, p. 248.

[4] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, pp. 632–633.

of the Potomac directing that certain persons claiming to have slaves in Sickles' camp should be permitted to search for and reclaim them. The general protested that this procedure might lead to disorder. He recommended to headquarters that when negroes identified by description were found with his forces they should be put outside his lines, thus relieving the military from direct identification with the surrender of fugitives. This course was accepted.[1] However, General Hooker, in whose division Sickles served, on several occasions gave permission to slave owners to search in the camps. Trouble resulted and, in a few instances, masters were assaulted.[2] October 3 General Lane wrote from his Kansas headquarters: "My brigade is not here for the purpose of interfering in any wise with the institution of slavery. They will not become negro thieves, nor shall they be prostituted into negro catchers. The institution of slavery must take care of itself."[3] General William T. Sherman in Kentucky, on the other hand, informed one of his officers on October 15, that two men had come to him claiming some slaves said to be in his camps, and that in accordance with federal and Kentucky laws the fugitives must be given up. He added: "Better keep the negroes out of your camp altogether, unless you brought them along with the regiment."[4] Three weeks later in another case, he gave similar instructions. He stated that he had received no orders from Washington on the subject, but believed the harboring of negroes constituted a source of misrepresenta-

[1] *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, p. 633.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 643–644.

[3] Lane to Sturgis, Oct. 3, 1861, The Negro in the Military Service, *loc. cit.*

[4] Sherman to Turchin, Oct. 15, 1861, *ibid.*

tion by which Union men were estranged from the government's cause.[1] At this same time General Thomas W. Sherman, at the head of an expedition in South Carolina, found that slaves were coming to him in droves, more than he could provide for.[2]

As General Dix advanced into the eastern shore district of Virginia in November, he issued a proclamation assuring the inhabitants that as long as they comported themselves quietly their laws, institutions and usages would be scrupulously respected. Special orders had been given to his troops not to interfere with the slaves of any person, and to avoid all mistakes, commanders of regiments and corps had been instructed not to permit any fugitives to enter their lines.[3] A week later, General Halleck, commanding the Department of Missouri, directed that no more fugitives be allowed within his army and that those already there should be excluded at once. He was fearful that slaves who were going in and out of his lines might communicate information to the enemy.[4] "It was a *military* and not a *political* order," he explained afterwards.[5]

[1] Sherman to McCook, Nov. 8, 1861, *ibid.*

[2] T. W. Sherman to Cameron, Nov. 11, 1861, War Department Files, 1861, MSS.

[3] Dix's proclamation, Nov. 13, 1861, McPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

[4] Halleck's general order No. 3, Nov. 20, 1861, The Negro in the Military Service, *loc. cit.*

[5] Halleck to F. P. Blair, Dec. 8, 1861, McPherson, *op. cit.*, p. 248, footnote. Dix's proclamation and Halleck's order called forth a good deal of opposition from the Abolitionist element in Congress. A resolution was offered in the House requesting the President to direct the recall of Halleck's order but it was tabled. Halleck's reply to his critics was put in his letter to Montgomery Blair: "I am ready to carry out any lawful instructions in regard to fugitive slaves which my superiors may give me, and to enforce any law which Congress may pass. But I cannot make law and will not violate it." *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 57-60, 76; Storey, Moorfield, *Charles Sumner*, pp. 204-205.

More significant and far-reaching than the action of any of these commanders was that taken by Frémont on August 30, nearly two months before his removal. In a proclamation of that date he declared: "The property, real and personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken an active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if they have any, are hereby declared freemen. . . ."[1] There can be little doubt but that the underlying motive of the general was personal and political, that he was attempting to win popular acclaim and thus divert the censure which was sure to follow an exposé of his wretched departmental administration.

The President, border states Unionists and the conservative element in the country were shocked at his bold usurpation of power.[2] Lincoln promptly requested Frémont, as of his own volition, to modify his proclamation so that it would conform to the first and fourth sections of the Confiscation Act. The general declined, and on September 11 the President directed the modification by an open order.[3] He was unwilling to allow

[1] Frémont's proclamation, Aug. 30, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, p. 467.

[2] Joseph Holt wrote the President of the alarm and condemnation felt by the people of Kentucky and begged him to modify it for the sake of the Union cause in that state. Holland, J. G., *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 332.

[3] Lincoln to Frémont, Sept. 2, 1861; Frémont to Lincoln, Sept. 8, 1861; Lincoln to Frémont, Sept. 11, 1861, *O. R.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 469, 477, 485–486. Senator Browning conversed with Frémont about the time Frémont received the President's first letter requesting him to modify the proclamation. The general declared he not only would not do so, but he would earry out his policy. Browning, Diary, Sept. 6, 1861, MS.

the military to go so far in displacing civil authority in political affairs.[1]

The news of Frémont's proclamation brought forth from the large and steadily increasing anti-slavery element in the West all the acclaim the general could have hoped for. The glamor attached to the "Pathfinder's" name was still infectious among Westerners; the abolition sentiment was strong among them and in him they saw a spokesman. Schuyler Colfax, a political leader of that section, wrote the President on September 7 that loyal men of all parties were unanimous in favor of Frémont's action. He thought the President should at least give it qualified approval.[2]

Eastern Abolitionists were equally enthusiastic. The *New York Sun* hoped that the proclamation would put an end to the "hush-a-by-baby" policy of the administration. It declared the government dared not rebuke Frémont.[3] The *Times, Evening Post* and *Tribune* of the same city commended it heartily.[4]

When the modification order came, the anti-slavery men turned upon Lincoln with unleashed fury. Radicals like Wade and Chandler were exceedingly bitter. They subsequently declared the general had "rightly judged in regard to the most effective means of subduing this rebellion."[5] For them the order was a challenge to

[1] The President stated his position clearly and firmly in a letter to Senator Browning on September 22. Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. iv, pp. 421–423.

[2] Colfax to Lincoln, Sept. 7, 1861, War Department Files, 1861.

[3] *New York Sun*, Sept. 3, 1861.

[4] *New York Times*, Sept. 2, 1861; *New York Evening Post*, Sept. 2, 1861; *New York Tribune*, Sept. 1 and 2, 1861.

[5] *Detroit Post and Tribune, Chandler*, pp. 253–254; *Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, part iii, p. 6. The Trumbull, John Sherman, Elihu B. Washburne and Chase papers in the Library of Congress contain many protests from constituents against Lincoln's modification order.

battle. Gideon Welles, who had strong Abolitionist leanings, wrote on September 22 that Frémont's action had been, "in the spirit", much the same as his own. "Whatever differences there may be, if any, with General Frémont, there is none and will be none, I think, on the question of slavery." But he could not explain why exception had been taken to the general's statements, and thought it unwise. The controversy, he believed, precluded any action being taken on charges of departmental maladministration, for the public would denounce it as persecution on account of the proclamation.[1] John Bigelow, then in Europe, wrote Seward of his extreme regret that the good effect produced by the general tenor of Frémont's proclamation should have been impaired by irregularities and illegalities in the mode of issue. He was certain no European government could align itself with the Confederacy if the people could be made to understand that the great war issue was slavery.[2]

One thing was clear: public sentiment had traveled swiftly and a long distance on the road toward emancipation since the passage of the Crittenden resolution—war for the preservation of the Union only—of the 22nd of July.

Cameron took no part in the controversy. It is another instance of his unwillingness to quarrel openly with a public favorite; and, of course, he was at this moment just emerging from the storm of protest against his own conduct of affairs. By the time he did strike at Frémont's maladminstration, late in October, the excitement over the proclamation had subsided. But the Sec-

[1] Welles to Mark Howard(?), Sept. 22, 1861, Welles MSS. Rhodes cites many other instances of the state of public feeling on the question. *History of the United States*, vol. iii, pp. 359–363.

[2] Bigelow to Seward, Oct. 3, 1861, Bancroft, *Seward*, vol. ii, p. 324, footnote.

retary must have been deeply impressed by the fact that Frémont's bungling of departmental business, which was, if anything, worse than his own, was quite forgotten when the slavery issue was at the fore. Why could he not reestablish himself on that same issue? The evidence seems to indicate that he resolved to make the attempt.

In October an expedition was fitted out under the leadership of General Thomas W. Sherman for an attack upon the South Carolina coast. A few days before it was ready to leave, Cameron drafted a letter of instructions to govern the handling of the slave problem, a thing which he did not do in other cases.[1] It was so worded that the commander would have been justified in arming slaves, and went a step further and provided that fugitives who entered the Union lines and served the government would never be returned to bondage except of their own accord. About October 9 Cameron left for the West accompanied by Adjutant-General Thomas for the purpose of investigating Frémont's department.[2] On October 14 Assistant Secretary Scott issued the letter of instructions on behalf of his chief.

Unfortunately for Cameron's plans, however, by some means the letter reached the attention of the President before it was issued. Lincoln recognized instantly that it might lead to the arming of slaves and that it offered fugitives their freedom at the expiration of their service to the Union cause. He would not permit these steps to be taken and revised the instructions at once.

Cameron's letter with the additions and omissions made by Lincoln was as follows (the words in parentheses were added by Lincoln; the sentence in italics was erased by him):

[1] Butler and others had had to put the issue up to Cameron squarely.

[2] Thomas to Cameron, Oct. 21, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. iii, p. 540.

In conducting military operations within States declared by the Proclamation of the President to be in a State of Insurrection, you will govern yourself, so far as persons held to service under the laws of such States are concerned, by the principles of the letters addressed by me to Major-General Butler, on the 30th of May and the 8th of August, copies of which are herewith furnished to you.

Special Instructions, adapted to special circumstances, cannot be given. Much must be referred to your own discretion, as Commanding General of the Expedition.

You will, however, in general, avail yourself of the services of any persons, whether fugitives from labor or not, who may offer them to the National Government. You will employ such persons in such services as they may be fitted for, either as ordinary employes, or, if (special) circumstances seem to require it, in any other capacity, with such organization in squads, companies or otherwise, as you may deem most beneficial to the service; (this, however, not to be a general arming of them for military service.) You will assure all loyal masters that Congress will provide just compensation to them for the loss of the services of the persons so employed. *And you will assure all persons held to involuntary labor, who may be thus received into the service of the Government, that they will, under no circumstances, be again reduced to their former condition, unless at the expiration of their respective terms of service, they freely choose to return to the service of their former masters.*

It is believed that the course thus indicated will best secure the substantial rights of loyal masters and the proper benefits to the United States, of the services of all disposed to support the Government; while it will avoid all interference with the social systems or local institutions of every State, beyond that which insurrection makes unavoidable, and which a restoration of peaceful relations, under the Constitution, will immediately remove.[1]

[1] Cameron (by Scott) to Sherman, Oct. 14, 1861, Chase MSS. The letter in the Chase papers is a carefully made copy of the original. It designates where Lincoln made the changes.

The President's revision so emasculated the instructions that there was little glory in them for Cameron. If construed literally, there was still a chance for arming some fugitives on special occasions, but it is quite certain that Lincoln did not intend even this. The War Department recognized the possibilities in the revised order, however, for Assistant Secretary Scott in reply to an inquiry wrote: " . . . The orders to General Sherman and other officers of the United States service authorize the arming of colored persons only in cases of great emergency and not under regular enrollment for military purposes." [1] The *New York Tribune* commented upon the Sherman order as going beyond Frémont's action in that it permitted the arming on occasion not only of fugitives from disloyal masters, but the loyal ones as well.[2] It did not, however, go in for any extravagant praise of Cameron on account of it.

How much influence Chase exerted in the drafting of the Secretary of War's order is unknown, but with the growing intimacy between him and Cameron, it is likely that he was at least consulted. He obtained a copy of the order and noted on it the President's revision.[3] Other persons were privy to the original draft too, for Thaddeus Stevens learned of it from them and quoted the changes in a speech which he made on April 28, 1862.[4]

The net result of Cameron's attempt at personal reestablishment in the popular favor was negligible. Nor did his exposure of the gross mismanagement of Frémont's department give him better standing. The general's friends could easily reverse the charges. The only

[1] Scott to G. P. Miller, Nov. 9, 1861, Military Book No. 47, MSS.

[2] *New York Tribune*, Nov. 25, 1861.

[3] *Vide*, pp. 341-342.

[4] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 1853.

advantage which came from the exposure was the removal of Frémont, a circumstance which led to a cutting down of extravagance and irregularity in the conduct of the war. Cameron did not despair at this first miscarriage of plans, however. He was too shrewd, cunning and persistent to give up so readily; he merely sought new opportunities to make fresh efforts.

About November 1 Cameron, accompanied by Colonel John Cochrane, escorted General Scott to New York as a final mark of respect to the old soldier going into retirement. The trip gave the Secretary a chance to air his new view on arming slaves, and Cochrane appears to have been taken along to aid in spreading the idea. On the 4th Cameron was serenaded at the Astor House. In response he made a speech, but made no reference to arming slaves. When he finished the crowd called for Cochrane, who had a bit of "Ben" Butler's bombast. The colonel had previously done some calculating on the number of slaves in the seceded states and concluded they could, if armed, prove of very considerable service to the Union cause.[1] He was therefore prepared to discourse on the desirability of using them and spoke briefly on the subject. He declared himself against the policy of emancipation and denounced proclamations as breeders of dissension. But, he added, General McClellan would commit a grave error if in his march southward he failed to avail himself of whatever allies might come to him, whether black or white. Such a course would be self-defense, and he believed it would be folly not to put arms in the hands of "four millions of allies and friends." His statements were greeted with loud applause.[2]

[1] *The War for the Union: Memoir of General John Cochrane*, pp. 14–15.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 14; *New York Herald*, Nov. 5, 1861.

From New York the Secretary and colonel went on to Springfield, Massachusetts. There is no record of speeches there, but Cameron talked privately and let it be known he was heartily in favor of arming the slaves. He declared he had sent an extra quantity of guns along with Sherman's South Carolina expedition for the purpose and would do the same thing in the cases of any other expedition thereafter so that all who wished to fight for the Union might do so.[1]

The trip north and the reception which the idea received where expressed seems to have convinced Cameron and Cochrane that they could command support for it if plainly espoused. Upon their return to Washington, the colonel says, "it was determined that the policy of introducing the slave in arms should be formally proposed and practically inaugurated."[2] The first step in this direction came on November 13 when Cochrane harrangued his troops on the subject. Cameron was on hand to lend moral and vocal support. The colonel was one of those politician-soldiers who graced the army in such numbers in 1861, and knew thoroughly how to put his palaver in persuasive fashion:

> Suppose the enemy's slaves were arrayed against you, would you, from any squeamishness, refrain from pointing against them the hostile gun, and prostrating them in death? No; that is your object and purport; and if you would seize their property, open their ports, and even destroy their lives, I ask you whether you would not use their slaves? Whether you would not arm their slaves and carry them in battalions against their masters? . . . Raise up a party of interest against the absent slave holder, distract their counsels, and if this should not be

[1] *New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1861, quoting from the *Hartford Courant; New York World*, Nov. 21, 1861.

[2] *The War for the Union, loc. cit.*, p. 15.

sufficient, take the slave by the hand, place a musket in it, and in God's name bid him strike for the liberty of the human race.[1]

When Cochrane ended, the Secretary stepped forward and put the stamp of official approval upon his remarks, saying: " . . . I will say that I heartily approve every sentiment uttered by your noble commander. The doctrine which he laid down I approve of as if they were my own words. They are my sentiments—sentiments that will not only lead us to victory, but will in the end reconstruct this our glorious Federal Constitution.[2]

The speech and Cameron's endorsement commanded wide attention at once, though not as favorable as the Secretary must have hoped for. In Kentucky, where Unionists were particularly sensitive on the slavery question, they were roundly condemned.[3] In the East they were looked upon as the machinations of politicians. The *New York World* declared it was only a part of the machinations going on between Seward and Cameron, both of whom were believed to be looking for the Presidency in 1864.[4]

[1] McPherson, *History of the Rebellion*, p. 415.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

[3] R. W. Bush to Holt, Nov. 23 1861, Holt MSS. A mass meeting of Union men was held at Frankfort on November 23 to denounce Cochrane's and Cameron's statements. Resolutions against them were passed unanimously. They contended the federal government had no constitutional power to interfere with slavery in the states, nor to deprive a citizen of his slave property without due process of law, nor the power to appropriate such property for the public use without just compensation. *New York Herald*, Nov. 30, 1861.

[4] Seward, it was said, had recently given out a statement to the effect that he had not consented to the removal of Frémont until the very last. This move was to open a back-fire upon Cameron, Chase and Blair and win to himself the German supporters of Frémont. Cameron's conversion from a conservative to an anti-slavery radical was considered to be nothing more nor less than a bold bid for Abolitionist

A few days after this episode Cameron followed up his first public announcement of his new plan by reiterating his sentiments in a speech at a reception. Unfortunately for him, however, the Secretary of the Interior, Caleb Smith, was present, and when called upon rebuked his colleague by disavowing such a policy and declaring it was not part of the administration's program in the prosecution of the war.[1]

Undaunted by this, Cameron now prepared to go the limit—to force the hand of the President who appears to have remained silent upon the Secretary's utterances up until this time. Toward the latter part of November Cameron wrote out his annual report and in the concluding paragraphs gave full vent to his slavery views. Being an official public document it would, of course, carry the implication that its contents represented the views and policies of the administration. Therein lay its great harm and effrontery. When the draft was completed the Secretary submitted it to several friends, chiefly from his own state. Many of them objected to his slavery sentiments. Wearied with objections on what he considered a vital matter, Cameron sought the opinion of the new special counsel of the War Department, Edwin M. Stanton, whom he characterized as "one of broad views, great courage and tremendous earnestness." After making certain changes regarding the slavery statements "so that the lawyers would not

support. *New York World*, Nov. 21, 1861. The *New York Evening Express* on November 26 declared it unfortunate for both the army and Lincoln that he had Presidential aspirants in the Cabinet in time of war. There is probably no foundation for these contentions. Seward by the end of the year knew that Lincoln was the best man in the administration, and Cameron's hopes for the Presidency must have been at a low ebb at this time.

[1] *New York Times*, Nov. 22, 1861.

carp at it," Stanton gave the report his hearty approval.[1] It now stated in part:

Those who make war against the Government justly forfeit all rights of property, privilege or security derived from the Constitution and laws against which they are in armed rebellion; and as labor and service of their slaves constitute the chief property of the rebels, such property should share the common fate of war, to which they have devoted the property of loyal citizens. . . . It is as clearly a right of the Government to arm slaves, when it may become necessary, as it is to use gun-powder taken from the enemy. Whether it is expedient to do so is purely a military question. . . . What to do with that species of property is a question that time and circumstances will solve, and need not be anticipated further than to repeat that they cannot be held by the Government as slaves. It would be useless to keep them as prisoners of war; and self-preservation, the highest duty of a government, or of individuals, demands that they should be disposed of in the most effective manner that will tend most speedily to suppress the insurrection and restore the authority of the Government. If it shall be found that the men who have been held by the rebels as slaves are capable of bearing arms and performing efficient military service, it is the right, and may become the duty, of the Government to arm and equip them, and employ their service against the rebels, under proper military regulation, discipline and command.[2]

Without showing the printed report to the President or informing him of its contents, Cameron hastened to dispatch copies to the postmasters in the principal cities for distribution to the press as soon as the President's message had been read to Congress.[3] Very soon after,

[1] Wilson, Henry, "Edwin M. Stanton," and "Jeremiah S. Black and Edwin M. Stanton," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. xxv, p. 238; vol. xxvi, p. 470; Cameron's order, Nov. 21, 1861, Stanton MSS.; Flower, *Stanton*, p. 116.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. v, pp. 125–126.

[3] *Ibid.*; Welles, Narrative of Events, MS.

Lincoln was astonished to learn of this extraordinary procedure. A reading of a copy of the report made apparent to him the haste and secrecy. When accosted Cameron attempted to excuse himself by saying that there was nothing particularly novel in his statements and that while Welles's reference to the use of slaves in the service was more brief than his, it was equally explicit and objectionable in this respect.[1] The latter contention was substantially true.[2] Lincoln requested that the copies sent out be recalled instantly and a new set printed containing a restrained statement to the effect that slaves abandoned by their masters should be received and held by the armies so as to lessen the enemy's potential military resources. There was nothing for Cameron to do but yield, and this he reluctantly did.[3]

The recall of the copies came too late, however, to completely conceal what had taken place. The suppressed portion appeared in one of the Washington papers and was quoted in the *Congressional Globe* on December 12.[4] Cameron's irregularity swept over the

[1] Welles, Narrative of Events, MS.

[2] In his annual report Welles said he had instructed naval officers that fugitives "should be cared for and employed in some useful manner, and might be enlisted to serve on our vessels or in our navy yards, receiving wages for their labor. If such employment could not be furnished to all by the navy, they might be referred to the army; and if no employment could be found for them in the public service, they should be allowed to proceed freely and peaceably without restraint to seek a livelihood in any loyal portion of the country." *Sen. Exec. Doc.* No. 1, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., vol. iii, p. 21.

This statement seems to indicate quite clearly that Welles, like Cameron and Frémont, was in advance of the President in his slavery views. The principal difference between Welles's statement and theirs was that he couched his views in a less offensive manner.

[3] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

[4] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 79.

country like wild-fire.[1] The *New York Tribune* told a dramatic story of the "scene" between the Secretary and the President. It had been received by mail from the paper's Washington correspondent after the censorship had withheld the telegraphic account.[2] But it was probably more fiction than truth.

The upshot of the matter was that Cameron found himself in a particularly uncomfortable position. Quite aside from the slavery issue itself, his disingenuous way of handling his report was enough to condemn him in the eyes of fair-minded men. No doubt he injured the cause he was professing to serve. In the discussion among Cabinet members Cameron was befriended by no one but Chase, who attempted to excuse him and defend his views. Seward who had begun as an ally of the Secretary of War did nothing now to relieve his embarrassment.[3] Cameron, having gone over to the side of the Secretary of the Treasury, had become *persona non grata* with him. Again, Seward still clung to the belief that the chief business of the administration was to restore the Union. He was convinced that the events of the year made the gradual decline of slavery inevitable and that to agitate the emancipation idea would probably

[1] It appears that it was known in Washington newspaper circles at the end of November that Cameron would advocate in his report the arming of slaves. On November 26 the *New York Evening Express* quoted the *Tribune* as saying such a stand was to be taken. Also a Washington dispatch to the *Herald* on November 30 reported to the same effect. *New York Herald*, Dec. 1, 1861.

[2] *New York Tribune*, Dec. 4, 1861. The *Herald* discussed Cameron's extraordinary actions and "revolutionary ideas" in an editorial, Dec. 3, 1861.

[3] Welles, Narrative of Events, MS. Welles says that the Cabinet believed that Lincoln was determined to dispense with the Secretary.

jeopardize the government's hold on the border states.[1] Cameron's report did cause a stir in that section. Secessionists in Kentucky were jubilant, thinking that the Secretary would drive the Unionists into the arms of the Confederacy. Rumors of the original statements in his report "almost fettered the hands and tongues of loyal men in the border States."[2] In Washington it was said that Cameron's views might lead to an outburst from McClellan whose ideas on the subject were conservative.[3] The *New York Times* made the trenchant observation that it was strange to hear a proposal to arm slaves when the government had not yet been able properly to arm all the white men in the ranks.[4]

So far as advocating anti-slavery views was concerned, Cameron was not amiss in judging of the drift of public sentiment. It had been gravitating toward abolition throughout the autumn, and the action of Congress in December very plainly reflected the fact. The people had grown decidedly restless under continued inaction all along the line. They wanted something to happen, action of some kind. "What is Lincoln doing?" asked William Herndon, the President's old law partner. "Does he suppose he can crush—squelch out this huge rebellion by pop-guns filled with rose water? He ought to hang somebody and get up a name for will or decisiveness of character. Let him hang some child or woman, if he has not courage to hang a *man*. This

[1] Bancroft, *Seward*, vol. ii, pp. 328, 347–348. It appears that the Secretary of State expected important results from a treaty for the suppression of the slave trade which he hoped to conclude with Great Britain. *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[2] S. Haycraft to Holt, Jan. 19, 1862, Holt MSS.

[3] *New York Herald*, Dec. 3, 1861.

[4] *New York Times*, Dec. 6, 1861.

Union must be preserved."[1] Frémont's proclamation started something, but the President stopped it. General Scott retired and McClellan was expected to advance, but nothing happened. Cameron proposed arming the slaves, but that was nipped in the bud. Lincoln's message had nothing exciting in it, nothing which promised an outlet for the public's pent-up energies. It was up to Congress to act.

[1] Herndon to Trumbull, Nov. 20, 1861, Trumbull MSS.

CHAPTER XII

The Departure of Cameron

It was probably with a great deal of foreboding that the administration witnessed the convening of Congress in December, 1861; and well it might for Congress was in a carping, cantankerous mood. The radicals began at once to form a large and powerful faction to prey upon the Executive and war management generally. They coaxed, cajoled and drove fellow members into cooperating with them.[1] They wanted a blood and thunder war upon the South and they meant to have it.

The demand for an explanation of the disaster at Ball's Bluff and the setting-up of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War were clear evidence that the legislators were bent upon an interference in military affairs. Also their refusal at this time to reaffirm that the war was being fought for the preservation of the Union only,[2] and Trumbull's introduction of a more drastic confiscation bill[3] amounted to a repudiation of the President's slavery policy and revealed a determination on the part of Congress to insist upon an attack upon the institution itself. Some of its members were still bitter against the modification of Frémont's proclamation; others were indignant that the debauchery in his department had been permitted to go on so long. Nearly all were furious at the inefficiency, extravagance and frauds

[1] J. F. Speed to Holt, Nov. 28; Dec. 8, 1861, Holt MSS.

[2] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 15.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 18.

that were being perpetrated upon the government under Cameron's management. The inactivity of the Army of the Potomac served only to sharpen the bad temper of the radical Republicans and disgust many others.

The Committee on the Conduct of the War led off in the attack upon the military by its inquisition of the generals. With the predisposition of its leaders against McClellan and General Charles Stone whom they believed primarily responsible for the Ball's Bluff affair, there was never any doubt what their course of action and conclusions would be. At the same time the Committee on Contracts began an attack upon the War Department by unfolding its evidence and making its charges against Cameron and his cohorts. And the members did it with telling effect.[1] With the people in a restless and disgruntled frame of mind, it was not difficult to impress them.

Certain it was that the War Department was a vulnerable point of attack. Lincoln was hardly in a position to defend the Secretary against the sworn testimony of an army of witnesses. And what was worse, neither the President nor anybody else could have or give any assurance of a vigorous prosecution of the conflict so long as Cameron was Secretary of War. His pointing with pride in his report to the economical administration of the service deceived nobody, and his declaration of intention to preserve the "strictest economy and accountability" in expenditures[2] was a vacuous promise that no one relied upon. Both statements would have been humorous had not his extravagance been little short of tragic. They were the more brazen and ludicrous in

[1] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., part i, *passim; New York Herald*, Dec. 18, 1861.

[2] Cameron's report, Dec. 1, 1861, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, p. 707.

view of the fact that his friend, the Secretary of the Treasury, had a few days earlier refused to accept the War Department estimates because they had been drawn with gross carelessness and contained glaring inconsistencies.[1]

There was much criticism of several of the bureaus in the War Department because of continued laxity and inefficiency. They had never risen to the occasion which the times demanded. Questions which could have been answered briefly were "laid over to rot." Adjutant General Thomas was said to be insolent and unmannerly, offending those who had business with him. Many beieved him "luke-warm" on the war ; the same was hinted of Judge Advocate General John F. Lee. Thomas was considered incompetent and too old for the task. The Ordnance Bureau was also under fire, and the surgeon-general was deemed utterly hopeless, "an incubus on the department."[2]

The Quartermaster Bureau was almost paralyzed for

[1] Chase to Cameron, Nov. 26, 1861, Ordnance Files, 1861, MSS. The computations of the several bureaus were based upon widely varying estimates as to the number of troops then in the field and thereafter to be employed. The quartermaster figures in the deficiency estimates and for future requisitions were on the basis of 700,000 men, yet the law had authorized the raising of a force of 500,000 only. In demanding a revision Chase reminded Cameron that he had protested again and again against going beyond the figures authorized by law. He was apprehensive that the publication of the present estimates or others approaching them in magnitude would "inflict a fatal blow on the national credit."

The total number in the field on January 1, 1862 was about 576,000 men. *Provost Marshal General's Report*, part i, p. 102.

[2] George Gibbs' Memorandum for McClellan, Jan. (?), 1862, McClellan MSS. This was a very full report made by a friend of the general for the purpose of informing him of affairs in Washington and on public opinion. He was intent on giving McClellan the exact situation so that he might gauge his course accordingly.

want of funds. The number of troops received under the haphazard system of recruiting had so far exceeded the estimates upon which the appropriations of the July session of Congress had been based, that the funds were exhausted and the bureau was heavily in debt for transportation and clothing. It was unable to pay promptly for supplies, even for forage indispensable to maintain the forces facing the enemy. Hired teamsters were threatening to quit the service because of irregular pay. Large quantities of supplies bought by states, citizen committees and others, and stocks of clothing and equipment of various kinds deposited in government depots were still unpaid for. The same was true of vessels bought or chartered for the service. Western railroads had given notice that unless their bills were paid they must discharge their employes and stop traffic.[1] Conditions such as these could not help but weaken the confidence of the public in the administration and confirm the prevailing conviction that Cameron was an incompetent Secretary of War, irrespective of whether the blame for such conditions belonged to him or not.

In December the legislature of Kentucky, indignant at Cameron's proposal to arm slaves, requested the President to dismiss him from his Cabinet.[2] Apparently undismayed by this or Lincoln's rebuke in requiring a revision of his report, Cameron wrote to General Hunter commending him for his advanced views on slavery.[3] In his letter Cameron said:

[1] Meigs to Stanton, Jan. 28, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i, pp. 865–867.

[2] *New York Evening Express*, Dec. 23, 1861.

[3] Hunter declared if he could have Buell's command in Kentucky he would advance into the South, proclaim the negroes free as he marched and put arms in their hands. "It is time slavery had its quietus; we have been trifling long enough." Hunter to Trumbull, Dec. 9, 1861, Trumbull MSS.

Your views upon the slavery question as connected with this war must, it seems to me, meet the approval of all men who are not controlled by the magical power of the slave interests . . . Looking at the map it seems to me—though I am unable to form an opinion at this distance—that you might push through Arkansas, reach the Mississippi River, and there easily effect a junction with either Halleck or Buell. Then, with your views in regard to the disposition of slaves and my sanction of them, I think that you will find a place in which to earn distinction. In conclusion I have to assure you that when opportunity occurs you shall not suffer for want of some one who is willing, and I trust able to take care of your interests here.[1]

When Lincoln turned from the department to the army in search of strength to bolster his defense against the Congressional attack, he found an almost equally desperate state of affairs. After months of preparation and great expense, the Army of the Potomac was quietly lodged a few miles below Washington. The close of the year found the general-in-chief in bed with a fever and his subordinates ignorant of his plans. Much of the public confidence in McClellan was giving way to indiscriminate criticism. Rumors and charges of all sorts were flying about: that he had never held a council of war and his subordinates were not in his confidence; that his army had not been divided into corps; that the Washington garrisons were in a defenseless state; that the army was not improving as it should because of incompetent officers; that regular army men were kept at the farce of recruiting for that branch of the service when they were needed for instructing volunteers; that others who desired to command volunteer regiments could get no positive replies to their requests; that the

[1] Cameron to Hunter, Jan. 3, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. liii, p. 512.

coast ports were left in an utterly defenseless condition. Still other criticisms were made which really reflected more directly upon the War Department, but since McClellan had not openly disapproved of them, it was assumed that he was satisfied.[1]

Conditions in the West were little or no better. In search of a ray of hope for an advance, that might appease the rising temper of Congress and the northern people, Lincoln wired Halleck on December 31 asking if he and Buell were acting in concert. The response was that they were not; Halleck was not ready to cooperate. Lincoln then consulted McClellan and together they discussed the western situation. The President had been studying strategy closely with the idea of comprehending the state of affairs and offering suggestions. As a result of the meeting McClellan proposed to Halleck a possible movement. Buell also made a proposal to Halleck which the latter rejected. It was clear that he was opposed to any action for the time being.[2] January 7 Lincoln wrote to both western generals saying: "Delay is ruining us, and it is indispensable for me to have something definite."[3] Halleck replied that he had asked Buell to designate a day for a demonstration so he might offer some assistance. "It is all I can do till I get arms," he said. "I have sent two unarmed regiments to assist as a feint."[4] On January 10 Lincoln received a letter which Halleck had written four days before. It discouraged action. Thoroughly depressed, Lincoln endorsed on a copy of it, pre-

[1] Gibbs' memorandum, Jan. (?), 1862, *loc. cit.*

[2] Nicolay ond Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. v, pp. 100–103.

[3] Lincoln to Buell, Jan. 7, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. vii, p. 535.

[4] Halleck to Lincoln, Jan. 7, 1862, *ibid.*

sumably for McClellan: "The within is a copy of a letter just received from General Halleck. It is exceedingly discouraging. As everywhere else, nothing can be done." [1]

Meanwhile, the Congressional radicals continued their efforts to stir up military activity. On Sunday, January 5, Chandler called on Secretary Chase to converse about army affairs. He was opposed to depending upon McClellan any longer and wanted McDowell put in command of the Army of the Potomac.[2] On Monday night the Cabinet met in joint session with the Committee on the Conduct of War. The latter, especially Chandler, Wade, Johnson, Odell and Covode, were very outspoken in urging the vigorous prosecution of the war and in recommending McDowell for the leadership of the Potomac forces. There was a great deal of talk, but apparently nothing definitely decided. Chase defended McClellan as the best man for the task, but believed the supervision of all the armies and the commanding of the Army of the Potomac was more than one man could handle.[3]

A few days after this, Sumner wrote to General Wadsworth probably for the purpose of getting some first-hand information as to what the true state of affairs was in the army before Washington. The general was as impatient as were the radicals. He replied that there was no sign of a movement and stated he had heard that McClellan had said the country ought to be satisfied that the capital had been protected. "I tell you confidenti-

[1] Halleck to Lincoln, Jan. 6, 1862, and Lincoln's endorsement, Jan. 10, *ibid.*, pp. 532–533.

[2] Chase, Diary and Letter Book, Dec. 9, 1861 to Sept. 30, 1863, Chase MSS.

[3] *Ibid.*

ally but advisedly," wrote Wadsworth, "that the army has lost confidence in its commander. It never had any, nor had anyone else, in the Secretary of War. Our only hope now is in the legislative branch. If you are competent to the crisis you may save the country; but you must do it soon or be too late." He asked Sumner to "make up a party" and ride out and dine with him. "I should be very much gratified if I could have an hour's conversation with a few influential gentlemen in the Senate." He wanted to let them know the real conditions and feelings of the army.[1]

On January 10 Lincoln was in desperate straits—no sign of a move anywhere, yet Congress and the people were clamoring for action. He went over to Quartermaster-General Meigs' office and sat down in a chair before the open fire. "General, what shall I do?" he asked. "The people are impatient; Chase has no money and he tells me he can raise no more; the General of the Army has typhoid fever. The bottom is out of the tub."[2] He might well have added among his woes, the fact that the Secretary of War was a millstone about the department's neck, for he certainly believed it. Meigs advised that he consult the generals next in rank and determine who should command the army since McClellan's sickness would incapacitate him for several weeks.[3]

The President acted on the suggestion and arranged for a conference at eight o'clock that evening. Generals McDowell and Franklin were summoned, and Chase, Seward and Assistant Secretary of War Scott were also

[1] Wadsworth to Sumner, Jan. 10, 1862, Pearson, Henry G., *James S. Wadsworth of Geneseo*, pp. 102–103.

[2] Meigs, Montgomery C., "The Relations of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton to the Military Commanders in the Civil War." *American Historical Review*, vol. xxvi, p. 292.

[3] *Ibid.*

called. Lincoln revealed his great agitation. McClellan's illness troubled him most of all. He said he had called at the general's house, but McClellan had not asked to see him. He needed counsel, and wanted to "borrow" the army if the commander was not going to use it. The question was, what should be done with it? McDowell and Franklin each described possible movements. They differed widely: the former favored an advance from the present position; Franklin believed it best to transfer the main body of the force to the York River and operate on Richmond from there. Scott thought the transportation facilities too inadequate for this. The upshot of the conference was that the two generals were ordered to gather as much information as needed the next day and to meet again at the White House in the evening.

This they did, and at night met again with the same officials. Montgomery Blair was also present. The generals had reached the conclusion that in view of the time required to move the army to another base, and other factors considered, it was advisable to operate from the present position. Blair opposed this, saying that to attempt it was to repeat Bull Run. He favored the transfer of the troops to York River or Fort Monroe, and believed that the transportation problem was less serious than was supposed. Seward and Chase spoke also; they knew nothing of the military question involved and were interested only in winning a victory somewhere and somehow. Lincoln decided that before anything further was done, Meigs should be questioned on the matter of water transportation. Franklin and McDowell were directed to consult him the next morning, January 12, and to report again at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Meigs agreed with McDowell that it was best to strike

from the present position. He estimated it would require from four to six weeks to provide water transportation for 30,000 men. In the afternoon he met with the rest of the conferees at the White House. Since the transfer was considered impossible at an early date, the discussion turned to a land movement. Finally Lincoln said that earlier in the day he and Seward had called upon McClellan and found him looking quite well. Since it was expected that he would be able to resume active charge presently, Lincoln decided to wait a day until McClellan could be present, before reaching a decision. The council adjourned to meet at eleven o'clock the following morning.

At the appointed hour, Lincoln, Seward, Chase, Blair, McClellan, Meigs, Franklin and McDowell, and probably Assistant Secretary Scott, met. The President explained to McClellan why he had called in the generals, and at his direction McDowell went over his plan for a forward movement from the present base. Both subordinates were rather apologetic, for McClellan was in a surly mood. Lincoln asked him what and when something could be done. The general replied that the case was so clear a blind man could see it. He was extremely reluctant to divulge his plans, however, saying he would do so only if "ordered." This the President declined to do, and when McClellan declared in response to a question, that he had fixed upon a time for commencing a movement, Lincoln was satisfied and adjourned the meeting.[1]

[1] The account of these councils of war is based on the following sources: Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac*, pp. 79–85 (containing a copy of the manuscript minutes by McDowell which were submitted to and approved by Lincoln in 1864); *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, Apr. 28, 1877 (Franklin's account); Meigs, Diary, MS.; Meigs' document, *American Historical Review*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 292–293. Senator Browning says that he had a long talk with the President on

This same day, January 13, the President reverted to the military problem in the West. As he judged the whole army situation, the Unionists had the advantage in numbers, the Confederates the advantage of greater facility of concentrating forces upon the point of collision. Therefore, to win the northern forces must, he believed, menace the enemy with superior power at different points at the same time. " . . . If he [the enemy] weakened one [point] to strengthen the other, forbear to attack the strengthened one, but seize and hold the weakened one, gaining so much." Applied to the situation in the West, this meant that both Halleck and Buell should menace the Confederates at the same moment, the former doing so at Columbus and "down river" generally, the latter at Bowling Green and in East Tennessee. These views were expressed in a letter to Buell, a copy being forwarded to Halleck. Lincoln premised them by saying that he desired them respectfully considered, but did not wish them followed contrary to the generals' own clear judgment unless they should be put in the form of orders.[1]

Buell made no reply to the letter; Halleck answered indirectly in a letter to McClellan on January 20, denouncing the "pepper-box strategy — scattering our troops so as to render them inferior in numbers in any place where they can meet the enemy." He thought the war up to date had been the result of political policy rather than military strategy, that movements had been governed by political expediency and in many cases

January 12, 1862, and that Lincoln told him he was thinking of taking the field himself. He suggested several plans of operations. One was to threaten all the enemy positions at the same time; another was to shell the enemy out of their entrenchments, Diary, MS. The former plan he suggested to Buell and Halleck the next day.

[1] Lincoln to Buell, Jan. 13, 1862, *O. R.*, ser. i, vol. vii, pp. 928–929.

directed by politicians to subserve their particular interests. There was a hint in what he wrote that Cameron had had a hand in all this.[1] But such was not the case. Cameron was too busy with the routine and patronage phases of his office to bother his head about military movements.

The week of agitating, suggesting and pleading with the military leaders netted Lincoln practically nothing. Although McClellan indicated he had a plan and a date in mind for its execution, the President soon found he could not approve of it. But in the end the general had his way and all remained quiet on the Potomac for several weeks more. Halleck and Buell, unconvinced as to the feasibility of a movement, remained with their principal contingents in their present positions. The first laurels of victory in that depressing winter came not to them but to General Grant and General Thomas, their respective subordinates.[2]

In the various conferences and councils held in search of a way out of the critical situation confronting the administration in December and January, Cameron had little or no part, although they pertained to matters closely related to his own department. Military discussions never interested him much, and he contributed little to them; in the political phases he was expert enough, but by this time he was no longer trusted. His judgments were too often based upon expediency and opportunism rather than upon principle. Cameron's admitted business ability never materialized in the War Office; his political instincts dominated his course and led him into so many vagaries and subserved so frequently the best interests of the government that he

[1] Halleck to McClellan, Jan. 20, 1862, *ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 509.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. v, pp. 116–117, 119–122.

became a burden to the administration when a titan of efficiency, resourcefulness and administrative wisdom was required.

Lincoln bore him for many months with characteristic magnanimity and patience, disregarded little personal indignities, defended him against unproved charges, overlooked his petty bargaining, tolerated his very apparent mismanagement. He liked Cameron's genial manner.[1] But there came a time when personal considerations had to be laid aside, when the Secretary's political machinations jeopardized an administration policy, when charges were made that could not be denied,—in short when the interests of the government demanded Cameron's departure and a new and better Secretary of War in his place.

That Lincoln had for some time been contemplating a change in the Secretaryship of the War Department cannot be doubted. In November in a conversation with R. W. Bush he expressed a desire that Joseph Holt should be assigned to the place.[2] Early in December he told Joshua F. Speed, an old friend, that he was anxious to recognize Holt in some form commensurate with his service to the country, and to do so as soon as possible. In informing Holt of this, Speed urged him to accept nothing less than the War Office, because he was certain Holt would be invited to take it if Cameron retired.[3] Still Lincoln held back, evidently waiting for the opportune moment to effect the change. This finally came in January.

Cassius M. Clay, minister to Russia, had grown rest-

[1] McClure, *Lincoln and Men of War Time*, p. 147.

[2] Bush to Holt, Nov. 23, 1861, Holt MSS.

[3] Speed to Holt, Dec. 8, 1861, *ibid.*

less at the court and was anxious to return to the United States and enter the military service—with high rank, of course. Lincoln was reluctant to consent to this for he had no confidence in Clay's military capacity, but finally yielded in order to get Cameron out of the War Department and into a foreign mission.[1] Cameron had on one or more occasions given indication that such a change would be to his liking.[2] When Lincoln became convinced that the switch was feasible, he sent Thurlow Weed quietly to sound out the Secretary as to whether the St. Petersburg mission would be acceptable to him. Weed broached the matter without mentioning that he did so at the President's request, and found that Cameron was not indisposed toward it.[3] The Secretary's attitude seems to have been that it was only a question of time until he would be forced to leave the department and the going abroad as an official representative of the government would be an agreeable vacation and a means of graceful and dignified withdrawal. He never intended to remain at a foreign court for any length of time.[4]

The circumstances surrounding the consummation of the President's plans for Cameron's departure and the selection of his successor, Stanton, are confused in a perfectly bewildering variety of testimony, and it is possible that the exact happenings will never be known with certainty. Cameron himself at different times varied his

[1] Browning, Diary, Dec. 12, 1862, MS.; *New York Herald*, Oct. 24, 1861.

[2] Chase's Diary, Jan. 12, 1862, quoted in Warden, Robert B., *Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase*, pp. 400–401; Schuckers, *Chase*, p. 430.

[3] Weed to the editor, June 25, 1878, *New York Tribune*, July 5, 1878

[4] M. Talbot to Sanford, June 11, 1862, Sanford Letter Book MSS.; Cameron to Butler, June 23, 1862, Butler, *Correspondence*, vol. i, p. 632.

story of his retirement although he always contended that he left the office of his own volition.[1] Chase's version of it and of Stanton's appointment is contrary to that of Secretaries Welles and Blair. The Secretary of the Treasury, who had a part in arranging matters, always insisted that Cameron practically resigned and was largely responsible for the choice of his successor;[2] the latter two were equally insistent that Cameron had no option as to his own course, and that Seward was primarily responsible for the selection of Stanton.[3] Alexander McClure, who conversed with Cameron on the night of January 12, the day when the Secretary was notified that he was to be nominated for the Russian post, says that Cameron was removed.[4] General Cochrane understood that Cameron was removed,[5] and Jeremiah S. Black thoroughly believed it and contended that the Secretary had no part whatsoever in the selection of

[1] *New York Times*, July 16, 1865; *New York Tribune*, Mar. 10, 1869; Ingersoll, *History of the War Department*, p. 526.

[2] Chase's Diary, Jan. 12, 1862, *loc. cit.*; Chase to Wilson, May 25, 1870, Letter Book, Chase MSS.; Chase to Cameron, undated, quoted in Wilson, Henry, "Jeremiah S. Black and Edwin M. Stanton," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. xxvi, p. 474; Chase to Black, July 4, 1870, *New York Evening Post*, Nov. 11, 1870; Memorandum of conversation between Chase and Schuckers, Jan. 22, 1871, Schuckers MSS.

[3] Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, pp. 57–59, 127–128.

The present writer published in the *American Historical Review*, vol. xxxi, no. 3, pp. 486-494, a document written by Gideon Welles which purported to be the true version of Cameron's appointment and retirement and the appointment of Stanton. It contains a great deal that is undoubtedly correct, but it is improbable that all his charges of intrigue on Seward's part are correct; it is inconceivable that Lincoln would have allowed the Secretary of State to usurp an executive function to the extent that Welles suggests.

[4] McClure to Lamon, May 8, 1871, Black MSS.; McClure, *Lincoln and Men of War Time*, pp. 150–151.

[5] Cochrane, John, *The War for the Union*, p. 19.

Stanton.[1] His assertions, however, do not appear to have had any foundation other than personal belief. To refute him Senator Wilson marshaled "first-hand" testimony from Chandler, Wade and Chase to prove that the Secretary resigned, and from these men, Cameron and Senator Ramsey to prove that Cameron brought about Stanton's succession.[2] Ramsey claimed to have his knowledge from Stanton's own lips.[3] Charles A. Dana, who served as Assistant Secretary of War under Stanton, in later years gave credit to both Cameron and Charles Sumner for the selection.[4] Undoubtedly Seward could have set forth a true statement of the retirement and succession for he certainly played an important part in both, but he chose to remain silent.

Whatever the political manoeuvers that went on behind the scenes during the second week of January actually were, Chase and Welles agree that on January 12 Cameron expected that he was not to remain in the Cabinet and that Stanton would almost certainly succeed him.[5] Cameron did not, however, expect to receive as curt a note as Lincoln sent him. This note, which probably bore the date of January 11, merely notified him that his nomination for the Russian mission would be sent to the Senate for confirmation. It expressed no regret at his leaving the Cabinet and paid no tribute to his service as Secretary.

[1] Black, Jeremiah S., "Senator Wilson and Edwin M. Stanton," *Galaxy*, vol. ix, pp. 827–828.

[2] Wilson, Henry, "Jeremiah S. Black and Edwin M. Stanton," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. xxvi, pp. 473–474.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 474.

[4] *New York Sun*, Mar. 15, 1896.

[5] Chase's Diary, Jan. 12, 1862, *loc. cit.*; Welles, Narrative of Events, MS.

Cameron was greatly offended.[1] After receiving the note he went to Seward's home where he knew Chase to be, showed it to them and said he supposed it "intended as a dismissal, and, therefore, discourteous." Both men assured him this could not be the case. Finally he concluded to retain the letter until the next morning, Monday, January 13, and then see the President. Chase says that when he and Cameron left Seward, he told Cameron that he had proposed to Seward Stanton's name for the War Office and that the Secretary took to it favorably. Chase suggested that when Cameron saw the President he should thank him for the Russian tender and urge the desirability of Stanton's appointment. He and Seward would do the same thing.[2]

In the evening Cameron called upon Thomas A. Scott, where Alexander McClure was visiting, and showed Lincoln's note. McClure says the Secretary, who was rather intoxicated, manifested great agitation over it, wept bitterly and roundly berated the President. He asked McClure's help in the matter and after a little time it was arranged that Lincoln should be requested to allow Cameron to ante-date a letter of resignation and then write a kind acceptance in reply. Chase was brought into the arrangement. Lincoln agreed and the result was a note more pleasing to Cameron.[3]

[1] Chase's Diary, Jan. 12, 1862, *loc. cit.*; Chase to Black, July 4, 1870, *New York Evening Post*, Nov. 11, 1870; Memorandum of conversation between Chase and J. W. Schuckers, Jan. *22*, 1871, Schuckers MSS. In this conversation Schuckers, who was Chase's private secretary, tried to find out the exact circumstances of Cameron's retirement. He was inclined to think that because Lincoln's note to Cameron was curt it was intended as a dismissal. Chase replied to this that the Secretary had talked of resigning. He admitted that Lincoln did "take time by the forelock" by his notification to Cameron that his nomination to Russia would be sent to the Senate for confirmation.

[2] Chase's Diary, Jan. 12, 1862, *loc. cit.*

[3] McClure to Lamon, May 8, 1871, Black MSS.; Chase to Black,

January 13 the nominations of Cameron and Stanton were sent to the Senate. Stanton's was confirmed without difficulty two days later, but serious opposition was encountered in Cameron's case. The Committee on Foreign Relations reported favorably upon it January 14, but when Sumner, Chairman of the Committee, proposed its immediate consideration the next day, Trumbull objected and it had to take its place on the calendar. On the 16th the nomination came up in executive session and the Illinoian opposed it in a very bitter speech. A protracted debate ensued but no vote was taken before adjournment. The following day the debate was continued. The charges made by the Committee on Contracts were reviewed and emphasized by Cameron's opponents, but Senators Wilson and Fessenden denied them and pointed out that there was nothing to fix suspicion upon Cameron's integrity. Finally the nomination was confirmed by a vote of twenty-eight to fourteen.[1]

Although he ceased to be Secretary on January 13, Cameron continued to act in that capacity until the following Saturday.[2] On the 20th Stanton took formal possession of the department.[3]

July 4, 1870, *loc. cit.* Schuckers says that Chase wrote the second note for Lincoln. The Secretary himself never admitted this. Memorandum on Cameron's retirement, undated, Schuckers MSS. Chase's Diary and Letter Book has this statement under the date of January 13, 1862: "To-day Genl Cameron resigned his place as Secretary of War, and Edwin M. Stanton, of Penna. was appointed in his stead." Chase MSS.

Nicolay and Hay quote a note from Lincoln to Cameron, January 11, 1862, notifying him that he was to be nominated the following Monday, January 13, as minister to Russia. McClure says this was not the same as the note which Cameron showed him on the evening of January 12. It may be that the printed note was the one substituted for the first one and bore its date. Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, vol. v, p. 128; McClure, *Lincoln and Men of War Time*, pp. 150–151.

[1] Browning, Diary; Jan. 13, 14, 16 and 17, 1862, MS.

[2] *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1862.

The change in the headship of the War Office was hailed as equivalent to a great Union victory in its effect upon the army and the country.[1] Stanton had the confidence of the people, and he was perhaps the only man who could have been selected who was so acceptable to Seward, Chase, Cameron, Chandler and Wade. His work as Attorney-General during the last months of Buchanan's administration had given him a national reputation as a man of unquestioned devotion to the Union and of great capacity and energy. He was not a politician and consequently brought to the task none of the encumbrances which had so militated against Cameron's usefulness. Lincoln had no personal liking for Stanton who previously had abused him, but he was never a man to allow personal feelings to stand in the way of what promised to be for the nation's good.

On the day he was sworn into office Stanton took his first step toward bringing order out of chaos in the War Department's affairs. He directed that the War Department be closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays to all business except that which related to active military operations in the field. Saturdays were to be devoted to the business of Senators and Representatives; Mondays to the business of the public.[2] Also he announced that he would transact no business and see no one at his residence.[3]

On January 29 he ordered that no article of foreign manufacture should be purchased if it could be obtained in the United States; all authorizations to purchase abroad were revoked. Those claiming to have contracts or agreements were required to give notice of the fact

[1] *New York Herald*, Jan. 15, 1862.

[2] Flower, *Stanton*, p. 129; *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1862.

[3] *Ibid.*

within fifteen days; all contracts, orders and agreements had to be made in writing and a copy filed with the head of the proper bureau.[1] The complete control of railroads and telegraphs was put under the immediate supervision of the Secretary's office with competent persons in charge of them.[2] Lincoln cooperated in centralizing military control by issuing on February 14, in the name of the Secretary of War, an executive order directing the release of all political and state prisoners held in military custody who should subscribe to a parole pledging themselves to give no aid to the enemy. It further provided that extraordinary arrests should thereafter be made under the direction of the military authorities only.[3] The effect of these centralizing orders was, of course, to divest Seward of the control which he had gained over censorship and military arrests.

Patronage hunters were thrown into confusion by the Secretary's suspension of over 1400 nominations on the military list. He proposed to examine the records so that merit and honors won in the field should be the determining factors in granting commissions and promotions.[4] A move was made to clear out of the War Department the "dead wood" who had entered it and obtained a foothold while Cameron was in charge.[5] Efforts of Congressmen to saddle the bureaus and army with friends and constituents were resisted, but even the

[1] *O. R.*, ser. iii, vol. i. pp. 869–870.

[2] *Supra*, pp. 238, 251

[3] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, vol. iii, p. 588.

[4] Flower, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[5] *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1862. On the day his nomination was confirmed, Stanton consulted the committee on the loyalty of federal employes to learn what persons in the department and in the service generally could be trusted and which ones should be arrested or dismissed. Flower, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

ruthless Stanton found it a discouraging and difficult business. Before he had been in office two weeks he wrote: "They often tempt me to quit the helm in despair." [1]

From the day he entered office, Stanton worked hand in hand with the war lords of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. He was of the same temperament as they and equally zealous for an advance of the Army of the Potomac. It was he, in conjunction with Welles, who urged upon the President the issuance of an order to advance. The result was the celebrated order of January 27 for a forward movement on February 22.[2]

One can readily imagine that there soon came a new tone into the department work, a quickened pace, a cutting of red tape and a greater earnestness of purpose. The new chief had little respect for persons, subordinates or superiors; social amenities and delicacies had no part in his make-up. He was blunt, impatient, explosive. Capable of large accomplishments himself, he expected much from those associated with him. His criticisms and scoldings were often harsh and abusive. Stanton's dispatches and orders savor of his own spirit and the kind of ardor he sought to inject into the War Department. They were clear and concise, the exact opposite of many of Cameron's with their loosely worded, ambiguous sentences. Everything had to be strictly according to regulations or it was summarily rejected. In the Secretary's endorsements there was less of the "Respectfully referred" and more of the "Referred." Requests were few, demands were frequent. His very handwriting seemed to betoken haste and power.[3]

[1] Stanton to C. A. Dana, Feb. 1, 1862, *ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 156; Welles, *Diary*, vol. i, p. 61.

[3] These observations are based upon a study of data in the War Department and Ordnance Files, 1862.

A letter of Joshua F. Speed's reveals interestingly the new order of things:

> Instead of the loose shackling way of doing business in the war office, with which I have been so much disgusted and which I have had so good an opportunity of seeing—there is now—order, regularity and precision—As an evidence—So soon as I saw him I made known our wants[1]—He asked me to put them in writing—I did so.
>
> He took it and endorsed upon it "to the Chief of Ordnance —fill the order at once if not in whole as much as could be done at once." I have now the pleasure of saying that the guns are being shipped. Thus I have accomplished in a few days what heretofore it would have taken as many weeks to do—I shall be much mistaken if he does not infuse into the whole army an energy and activity which we have not seen heretofore.[2]

In giving credit to Stanton where Cameron had failed, it must be acknowledged that in many respects his problem was less difficult than Cameron's. He entered the department after it had undergone the stress of nine months of war. Deplorable though some of its conditions continued to be, it was larger in personnel, richer in equipment, ripened in experience. Cameron's task in large measure had been to create, Stanton's was to put things in order and supplement them from time to time. There was an army of more than half a million men in field and camp, fairly well armed, clothed and fed. Here again his duty was to augment, and the facilities of the country for doing so were very much better than they had been six or even three months before. Private and government armories and factories had been enlarged

[1] In Kentucky.

[2] Speed to Holt, Feb. 4, 1862, Holt MSS.

and new one established so that it was possible in 1862 to obtain a greater supply and in less time than before.

To help in the administration and expedition of departmental business, an act of January 22, authorized the appointment of two additional Assistant Secretaries of War, and by another of January 27, forty-nine clerks, four messengers and two laborers were added to the force. Also the adjutant-general was authorized to augment his clerical personnel by ten non-commissioned officers.[1] These additions were of inestimable value; for aside from the general laxity and inefficiency, a great deal of delay had undoubtedly been due to sheer lack of man-power to handle the steadily increasing volume of business.[2]

Although Cameron closed his career as an executive officer of the government in January and took with him a commission as minister to Russia, the House of Representatives was not content to let him escape without the stamp of its disapproval. The members of the Committee on Contracts had labored long and assiduously in collecting evidence against his conduct of affairs and they did not rest easily until they had divulged what they knew and supplemented it with biting invective and insinuations. Not until April 30 did they conclude their revelations and condemnations. When finished they asked the House to crown their efforts by passing two resolutions: one condemned the practice of employing irresponsible persons when regular government officers were at hand, and the purchasing by private contract instead of by advertising for bids; the other placed the stigmatism of a public censure upon Cameron for his improper employment of Alexander Cummings, his

[1] *U. S. Stat.*, vol. xii, pp. 332, 333.

[2] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 288.

political henchman, in purchasing work. This resolution stated:

Resolved, That Simon Cameron, late Secretary of War, by investing Alexander Cummings with the control of large sums of the public money, and authority to purchase military supplies, without restriction, without requiring from him any guarantee for the faithful performance of his duties, when the services of competent public officers were available, and by involving the Government in a vast number of contracts with persons not legitimately engaged in the business pertaining to the subject-matter of such contracts, especially in the purchase of arms for future delivery, has adopted a policy highly injurious to the public service, and deserves the censure of this House.[1]

The first resolution was agreed to without a dissenting voice; the censure passed by a vote of 79 to 45.[2]

A few weeks after the resolution had passed, the President with characteristic magnaminity wrote and transmitted to the House a special message explaining the trying circumstances which had motivated the selection of irregular agents, and declaring that if there was any blame to be attached, it should rest upon himself and the other members of the Cabinet as well for all had assented to the proceedings.[3] True though these contentions may have been, the Representatives remained unconvinced and the censure stood.[4]

[1] *Cong. Globe*, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 1888.

[2] *Ibid.* A resolution offered the same day to censure Secretary Welles for similar practices failed by a vote of 72 to 45. *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 2383.

[4] On March 2, 1875, the House passed a resolution offered by Representative Schofield of Pennsylvania rescinding the censure. Schofield justified the resolution on the ground of Lincoln's special message. *Cong. Record*, 43rd Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 2085.

Cameron warmly appreciated the President's generous act nevertheless; he remained a devoted friend and in 1864 gave himself unsparingly toward bringing about Lincoln's renomination and reelection.[1] Loyalty and service to friends was an almost never-failing principle of Cameron's political creed.

But it is to be regretted that there was not more of the statesman and less of the politician in him. As Secretary of War in 1861 Cameron was given an opportunity to serve the nation nobly in the darkest days since its creation, but he cast the opportunity aside. Politics and plunder were temptations he could not resist. He began his Secretaryship with the distribution of offices and ended it with the distribution of contracts. If he himself profited only through the diversion of certain traffic over the Northern Central Railroad, others, through his assistance, reaped large fortunes. Pressing public business waited while friends, time-servers and political creditors received their due.

Even after making liberal allowance for the deficiencies of the department and the army in the spring of 1861, and for the difficulties of improving them to meet the stress of war, it is impossible to credit Cameron with a modicum of success. The war governors and volunteer agencies in large measure saved the situation in the early months of the war, and much of what was achieved in the later months of 1861 was the result of the efficient work of men like Meigs and Thomas A. Scott. The *New York Herald* made no exaggeration in declaring the Secretary's departure equivalent to a great Union victory. It was one of the few happy events of a dark period; in no small degree it marked a turn of the tide in the civil prosecution of the war.

[1] Nicolay and Hay, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

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